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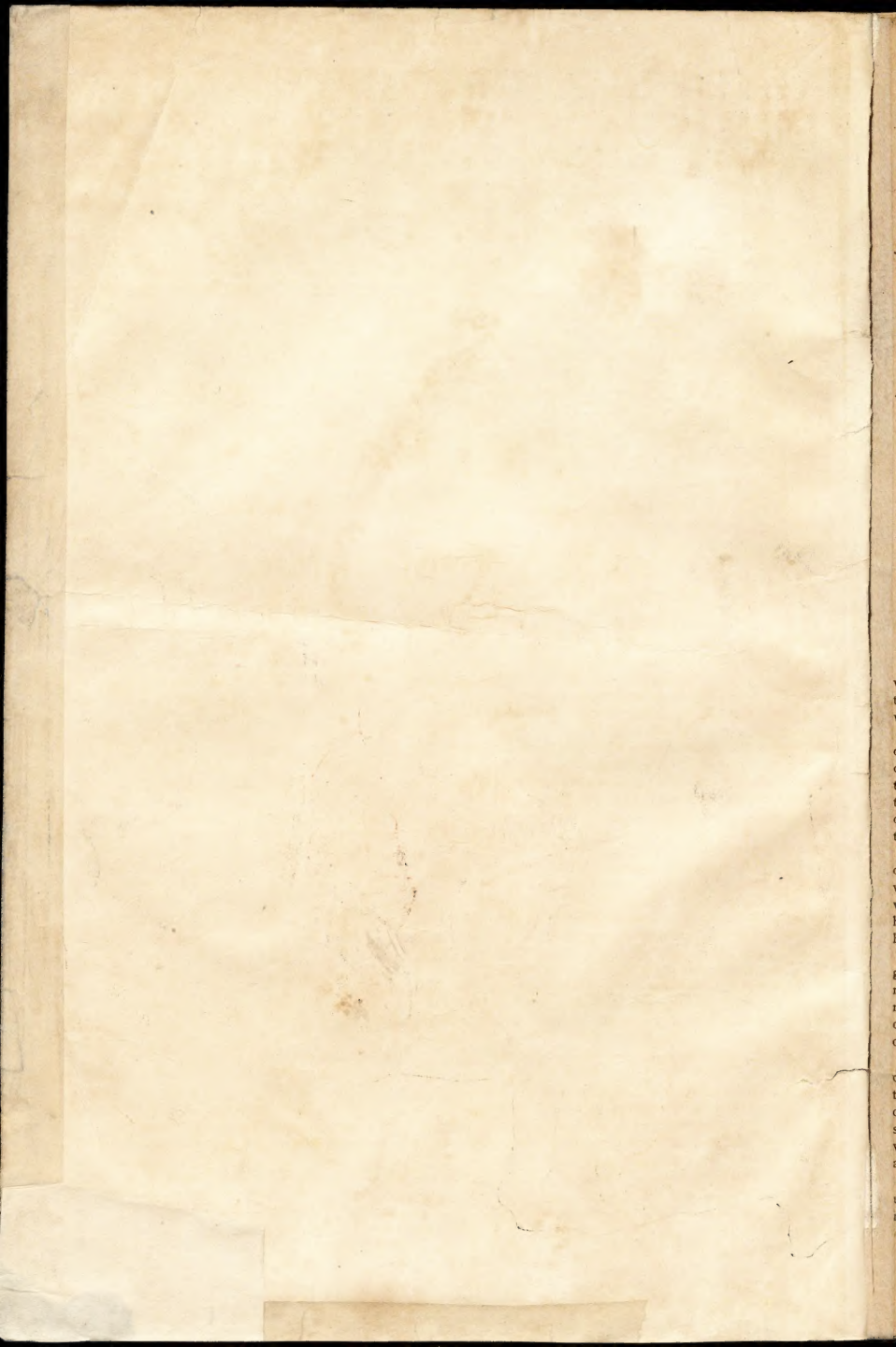
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Nick Carter Stories

THE CROSS OF DAGGERS
OR IN THE LAIR OF THE
DEVIL WORSHIPERS—



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NICK CARTER STORIES

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No. 48.

NEW YORK, August 9, 1913.

Price Five Cents.

THE CROSS OF DAGGERS;

Or, IN THE LAIR OF THE DEVIL WORSHIPERS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRISONER IN THE BACK

It was ten o'clock in the evening—Friday night.

Nick Carter, disguised as a middle-aged gentleman of well-to-do position in the world, was standing idly near the corner of First Avenue and Twentieth Street. He was evidently awaiting the arrival of another person.

Near him, in fact, not twenty feet away, a taxicab had drawn up at the curb, and the chauffeur seemed to be dozing in his seat behind the steering wheel, as if he, too, were awaiting the coming of an expected fare, but there was no apparent connection between the presence of the man standing on the sidewalk and the waiting taxicab.

Presently, through Twentieth Street, from the direction of Second Avenue, a man approached them. His head was bent forward, and he seemed to have centered his whole attention upon the pavement in front of him as he walked, and so absorbed was he in his occupation that he did not perceive that he was followed.

It is doubtful, indeed, if he would have devoted a second glance upon the individual who was tracking him, had he noticed him at all, for that individual appeared to be nothing more than a Chinese laundryman with a bundle of clean wash under his arm, bent upon delivering it to its owner.

Nevertheless, when the detective discovered the approach of the two, he kept his eyes upon the Chinaman, rather than upon the man ahead of him, and when the former dropped the bundle he was carrying, Nick took several steps nearer to the taxicab, and said something in a low voice to the chauffeur, who instantly leaped to the ground and opened the door of his car.

As if the plans of Nick Carter were assisted even by that uncertain quantity called chance, there was not at that moment another human being in sight along the street,

save those already mentioned, and so Nick drew even nearer to the open door of the conveyance.

Presently the man who was approaching with his head bent forward, came so near to Nick that he might have touched him, and then, with a quick motion the detective placed himself directly in front of the stranger.

"Pardon me, sir," he said, "but have you lost something?"

"Nothing more than I shall be able to discover again without the aid of your assistance," replied the stranger vaguely.

"But I have just found something," continued Nick, unruffled.

"Then keep it," said the man. "I have lost nothing."

"No? And yet if you will take the trouble to look inside this taxicab you will——"

"Confound your taxicab! Let me pass!"

"Really, sir——"

"Let me pass, I say!"

He started forward impetuously, as if it were his intention to brush the detective aside, wilfully, which was precisely what Nick desired him to do.

In an instant the stranger found himself seized in a grip of steel; a hand was placed over his mouth to prevent him from crying out, his arms were drawn behind him and shackled by the chauffeur, who had stood ready to render assistance at the right moment, other shackles were snapped upon his ankles, and he was bundled unceremoniously into the taxicab.

"Now, sir," said Nick sternly, as the chauffeur started the taxicab at a rapid clip westward through Twentieth Street, "you are in no danger, and you will suffer no personal injury. After a few hours you shall have your liberty again, and you will have lost nothing more than a little time. Now, will you promise to keep silent—to utter no sound save in a natural tone of voice? If you do not promise, I shall put a gag in your mouth."

"You needn't gag me. I'll promise to keep still," growled the man.

"All right," said Nick. "But bear in mind that at the first attempt to call out or to attract attention, you will probably get hurt, and the gag will be put into your mouth besides."

"Will you tell me what this outrage means?" asked the man, who seemed to be perfectly cool.

"I will, presently. Just now there isn't time. When we arrive at the house where I am conducting you, you will find out all that is puzzling you now."

"Who the devil are you, anyhow?"

"Just a person who desires to make your better acquaintance," said Nick, laughing.

"Humph! You take a mighty queer way to do it."

"Possibly. However, as long as it is effective, what difference does that make?"

"None to you, I suppose, but considerable to me. You are keeping me from an important engagement."

"I am quite well aware of that, sir. In fact, that is why I stopped you—because I did not wish you to keep that engagement."

"The devil you didn't!"

"Exactly. In fact, I wished to keep it for you."

"You're a cool proposition," said the stranger.

"Comfortably so, thank you," replied Nick.

"Confound your impudence! You must be as strong as an ox, my friend."

"I am certainly not a weakling."

"That you are not. It takes more than an ordinary man to handle me."

"So I have been told."

"Eh? You know me, then?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

The man was silent for a moment, and then, in a perfectly commonplace tone he inquired:

"I wonder if by chance you could be that detective fellow whom they call Nick Carter?"

"It is more than likely," said Nick.

"Are you Nick Carter, sure enough?"

"You have said it, Mr. Chelsea."

"Good! I'm rather glad to meet you, even under these unpleasant circumstances."

"That is kind of you," said Nick.

"Don't mention it. But, I say, now that you have got me, what are you going to do with me? I am not a crook."

"I am quite well aware of that, sir."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I have already told you. I want to keep your engagement in your place."

The stranger laughed aloud.

"That's a good one," he said. "I heard you when you said it, but I didn't believe you—any more than I believe it now."

"Why not?"

"Because you can't."

"Again, why not?"

"Well, there are several reasons, the chief one being that nobody could keep it but me, and if anybody should try it, he would be a dead Indian before he was halfway through with the game."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I'd bet a cold thousand on it."

"Done! I'll take your bet, Mr. Chelsea; all the more

readily because I know that you can well afford to pay it, and because by winning that thousand I will save you your entire fortune, and probably your life."

"All right, Mr. Carter. The bet is on. As for the rest of what you have said, that's all balderdash, don't you know?"

"Why?"

"Oh, I'm no chicken. I'm not giving up my dough to the first man that asks me, and I'm much too used to danger to let my life slip out of my hands without—well, without showing a few others how to lead the way into the next world."

"I could point out several quiet spots in the world where the grass is growing over those who have tried to speed my way into a better and brighter life. I don't suppose you believe that you can force me to give up any particulars about that engagement, do you?"

"I hadn't such an idea."

"I'm glad you had not, because I wouldn't."

"You don't have to, Mr. Chelsea, because, as a matter of fact, I know more about the secrets of your new friends than you do yourself."

"Bluff, Mr. Carter, bluff!"

"Nary a bluff, Mr. Chelsea."

"Well, I'll see you, and raise you. Where was I going? Tell me that."

"I will reply to that question, but not exactly in the way you expect," replied Nick. "You were going, my friend," continued the detective, speaking very slowly and distinctly, "to a place where you would be compelled to place your fortune and your life in the hands and under the absolute control of the most unscrupulous devil that ever lived."

"Then I suppose I ought to thank you for having kept me out of bad company?" said the man, with a perceptible sneer.

"You will thank me before I am through with you, but I don't expect you to do so to-night, because I have wounded you on your most vulnerable point."

"Have you, indeed? What is that?"

"Your vanity."

"I say, Mr. Carter, I like your check. If I was free I'd take a fall out of you for saying that."

"I will say it to you some time when you are free."

"Good! Is that a bargain?"

"Surely. Now, here we are at my house. Will you promise to walk in quietly if I take the shackles off your feet? Thank you. You will find this a much more comfortable place in which to spend the night than in the meeting place of your friends, the Devil Worshipers."

"So you are on to that, too, eh? All right, Carter. You've got the drop on me just now, but my turn will come—later."

CHAPTER II.

STEALING AN IDENTITY.

The detective conducted his involuntary guest straight to his study, and, pointing to a chair of inviting appearance, asked him to occupy it.

"Take a seat," said the detective, "and I will remove the shackles from your wrists."

"Better not," replied Chelsea, "for I won't promise not to try to keep that engagement, after all."

"Oh, you won't keep that," smiled Nick; "and you will

find the chair so comfortable that you'll be glad to remain there. Ah! thank you."

The man dropped into the chair indicated, with a rather defiant air.

Instantly Nick pressed a spring at the back of the chair, and two heavy oak arms swung around in front of the occupant and locked themselves together, so that he was effectually a prisoner. He could not have arisen had he possessed thrice the strength of Nick Carter himself.

"I hope you find yourself quite comfortable," said the detective, with a smile; and the man in the chair grinned back at him.

"Carter, you're a wonder," he said composedly. "I fully intended to have it out with you the moment you freed my hands, and now, behold; I couldn't get upon my feet if I tried my—er—best, could I? The chair is quite comfortable, too, as long as one is satisfied to sit still. It must weigh about a ton, doesn't it?"

"Not quite; only I wouldn't advise you to try to carry it away. It is loaded with more things than weight."

"Would you mind telling me what you are going to do with me now?"

"I'm going to borrow you."

"Borrow me! It strikes me that you have come pretty near to doing that very thing already."

"Oh, no," said Nick, with a smile. "I have taken you by force; but you will observe that I have only taken your body—that is, your liberty. Now I propose to borrow your identity."

"I'm afraid you'll have to explain that ante, partner; it's rather over my limit."

"That's easy. I'm going to become Mr. Thomas Chelsea for a few hours. Do you understand what I intend doing, now?"

"Not quite. You are a little too much for me yet."

"Well, watch me, and you will catch on presently. If you will be patient I'll show you a kind of art that you have never imagined. In other words, in about fifteen or twenty minutes I'll show you your own double standing before you, and it will be so perfect that your own mother wouldn't know the difference. She wouldn't know which is Tom Chelsea and which is not."

"Bully! I'd like to see that done, inasmuch as I can't help it. Fire away! You are the actor and I am the audience; is that it?"

"Yes, that's it."

The detective secured a mirror from one corner of the room and stood it beside his guest. It rested upon a pedestal not unlike a chiffonier, save that it was much lighter in weight, and the drawers were shallow. Then, opening the latter, he took therefrom the tools with which he intended to work, consisting of paints and pigments, brushes and pencils, and, in short, a complete array of material for the most complex make-up.

"Now, Mr. Chelsea," Nick said, "I believe that we are ready."

"Good! Let her go," replied Chelsea, "This looks like a one, two, three shot in your favor."

"It is," said Nick. "Watch me."

He stripped off his coat and vest, collar, and tie, and began work.

Thomas Chelsea was not much past thirty years of age, and was approximately of the same height and build as the detective, but his hair was sandy in hue, and he wore a mustache and a tuft of hair upon his nether lip. Also,

there was a scar of considerable proportions over his right temple which began among the hairs on his head and led downward to the lobe of his ear. His complexion was rather florid, and his cheeks were somewhat more full than the detective's, while his chin was not so prominent and his nose was of decidedly different shape, as were also his ears.

But these differences were mere details to the art of the detective, who enjoyed nothing that was connected with his profession better than to impersonate another; and the more difficult the impersonation, the better he liked it.

For the benefit of the few of our readers who are not familiar with the beginning of Nick Carter's career, it is well to mention at this point that the detective was trained almost from the cradle for the profession he was to follow, and that the sudden and violent death of his father placed in an instant the entire responsibility of many great and perplexing cases in his hands while he was still a youth.

But he was equal to them all.

In nothing that could pertain to the uses of his career had his education been neglected.

He was proficient in almost every spoken language of the globe; his muscles were like steel, and he possessed sufficient strength to put a Sandow on his back; he had studied vocalization until he could pitch his voice in any key he chose, and disguise it, or imitate the voice of another, be it man or woman, with the ease of an accomplished ventriloquist; when he was sixteen years old, he could stand behind a high-backed chair in one corner of a room, and, without leaving that spot or using other accessories than those he could carry in ordinary pockets, he could personate thirteen different characters in as many minutes, and do them all so perfectly that not one of them would be thought to resemble another, and for each one he had a different voice.

On one occasion, while his father was still alive, and while Nick was yet a mere lad, he made himself up as a representation of his father, and copied him so perfectly in feature, voice, and figure that his own mother was deceived until the young joker could hold in no longer, and betrayed himself by laughing.

Thus had his education, watched over by his father from the child's infancy, developed every possibility within him to the point of perfection, and so there was nothing which comes within the range of human attainment to which he had given his attention, in which he did not perform to perfection.

And so, as will be perceived, the mere copying of Thomas Chelsea's appearance and voice and the perfect impersonation of his character, became, to express it in commonplace but emphatic words, "dead easy."

While he worked now in front of the mirror, with the eyes of his model fixed upon him, it would have been an amusing entertainment to have watched the face of Thomas Chelsea.

When the detective began his process of copying, the expression upon the face of his guest suggested amused indifference and supercilious unbelief that it could be done.

As Nick Carter proceeded, that expression on Thomas Chelsea's face began to change, and presently to develop into one of undisguised wonder, and at last he became so absorbed in the contemplation of what was taking place

before him that he forgot the circumstances under which he was permitted to view the work of the great expert, and remembered only the rapid evolutions of the brushes and pencils, the change in contour and shape of the face before him, and the wonderful transformation that was taking place in front of his eyes.

Never would he have believed such a performance possible had he not been permitted to see it for himself, and at last, when it was completed and the detective threw down his tools, Chelsea leaned back in his chair, drew a long breath, and, with an expression of dismay upon his face which even the detective would have found it difficult to imitate, he ejaculated:

"Well, what do you think of that!"

"Precisely," said Nick, laughing, and imitating perfectly the voice and drawl of his companion. "What do you think of it?"

"It is perfect. I'm blown if you don't look more like Tom Chelsea than I do myself."

"Thank you. That is something of a compliment."

"More than you think, perhaps. I say, Carter."

"Well?"

"It begins to look as if I were going to keep that engagement, after all."

"So you are."

"And play the traitor, eh? Betray the whole outfit?"

"If necessary; yes."

"That is rather rotten treatment, isn't it?"

"Perhaps; but it depends upon how one looks at it."

"You look like a pretty square sort of chap, Carter."

"Do you mean now? Since I have changed my appearance?"

"No, confound it! I mean before you changed; while you were yourself."

"Then I'll have to thank you."

"Blow that! That isn't what I am getting at."

"Well, what are you getting at?"

"This: I don't like to let you take my identity away with you and use it to betray an outfit that I've sworn not to betray. I never went back on anybody in my life, and I don't relish the thought of having it done in my name."

"Very well. Let me return the compliment you paid me just now. You look like a pretty square sort of chap yourself."

"I am, too, by thunder! As square as they make 'em. Anybody who knows Tom Chelsea will tell you that. I am, too."

"I don't need to be told. I believe it."

"Well, then, why the dev—"

"Look here, Chelsea, would you stand by with your hands in your pockets and see a child tortured without trying to prevent it?"

"I reckon not, Mr. Carter," replied Chelsea calmly, but his eyes blazed and his voice was a full tone deeper than before. "Even this infernal chair couldn't hold me in a case of that sort."

"I believe you. If a woman called out to you for assistance, would the oath you have taken to the people you were going to meet to-night keep you from going to her assistance?"

"Not by a darn sight!"

"Would you consent to sit idly near a spot where an unoffending person was made to undergo excruciating

torture, and not lift your arm or your voice to try and stop it?"

"Of course I would not! But I don't see—"

"If you had gone where you intended to go to-night, you would have been forced to do all that I have described, and there would have been no way for you to prevent it. You would have been as helpless as you are now."

"I am doing you the greatest favor of your life in bringing you here," continued Nick, "and compelling you by force to stay here, and by going to keep that engagement in your place."

"Maybe that's true, and again maybe it isn't. Suppose I don't believe you?"

"You can believe what you please. I know, and that is sufficient for me."

"Gee whiz, Carter, but I reckon you're the right sort, after all."

"You'll know, after a while."

"What are you going to do with me while you are away?"

"Leave you where you are. There are books and magazines within your reach. There are refreshments and cigars to your hand, and if you want anything that you cannot reach, touch that bell on the table beside you, and a servant will answer, and bring you anything in reason."

"But suppose that outfit should do you, and you shouldn't come back at all?"

"I always come back."

"I reckon that's so. Say, how in blazes did you get onto this Devil Worshiping business?"

"That is too long a story to tell now."

"Well, then, how did you connect me with it, and how did you happen to pick me out for your pipe-dream plan to-night?"

"I don't mind telling you: It was purely an accident as far as you are concerned. I and my assistants have been keeping an eye on the Devil Worshipers for some time. I had made up my mind to attend their meeting, and I wanted somebody to copy so that I would be admitted."

"We spotted you while you were following up the chalk marks on the pavement that told you where the meeting was to be held, and I heard you say that you were going to meet one of the members near the place at ten o'clock."

"I laid for you, and you know the rest. Ten o'clock gave me plenty of time, as the meeting doesn't take place till two in the morning. When it does take place I'll be there, and when I see you again you'll thank me for keeping you away."

"Maybe I will—if you do come back; but I'll tell you right now, Carter, that outfit is not an easy one to fool."

CHAPTER III.

NICK CARTER GIVES HIS ORDERS.

When the detective turned to leave the room, Chelsea called him back, and there was a humorous twinkle in his eyes as he said:

"Look here, Mr. Carter, there is one thing connected with this expedition of yours that I have a right to insist upon."

"What may that be?" asked Nick.

"Are you aware of the fact that you are responsible

for the conduct of Thomas Chelsea while you are out in that rig?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, I want you to keep him in good company."

"Saving the presence of the Devil Worshipers, I think I may promise you that."

"And keep him sober, too."

"That might depend on how much he can stand."

"Ha! That is just the point; exactly the point. He can't stand a drop."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, you see, I've sworn off, and you see if you should happen to take a nip or two while you're circulating around in that rig, it might get into my blood again."

"There; so long. I won't keep you any longer. You may think that I take this situation with a good deal of complacency, but the fact is I learned long ago not to strive against the impossible, and just now it is utterly impossible for me to prevent you from playing out your little game to the end. I don't mind telling you, however, that if you will let me up for half a minute I will——"

"Good night!" said Nick, laughing, and turning toward the door. "Keep up your spirits, and don't get lonely."

"Nary a lonely; and don't you forget that Tommy Chelsea'll see the day he'll get even. That isn't a threat, Nick Carter; it's just a statement."

In the library Nick found Ten-Ichi, the detective's Japanese assistant, and Patsy awaiting him.

Patsy, as the reader no doubt suspects, was the chauffeur of the taxicab which brought the detective and his unwilling companion to the house, while Ten-Ichi had played the part of the Chinaman in order to assure Nick by the dropping of his bundle that the man he was following was the one who was wanted.

Nick had thought it best to use a taxicab instead of one of his own cars, with Danny behind the wheel.

"Now, Patsy and Ten-Ichi," said Nick, "I want you both to pay attention to what I am about to say. Ten-Ichi, you have been initiated among the Devil Worshipers in your own country. You will, therefore, experience no difficulty in obtaining admittance to the meeting of their clique to-night."

"None at all, sir."

"I want you to go there and to work on your own plans, independently of me, for, as you see by this disguise, and as you know by what I have already told you before we captured Chelsea, I'm going to be present at that meeting."

"You will have to take the initiation, and it won't be pleasant," said Ten-Ichi.

"Never mind that. With the schooling you have given me about their passwords and signs, I think I will have no difficulty. What I want you to understand is this: That, no matter what happens, or what takes place, even if you believe me to be in imminent danger, I don't want you to raise a hand or to do a thing to assist me unless I give you the signal that I want you to do so. Will you obey me?"

"Certainly, sir."

Remember, I expect implicit obedience on this point. Even if they discover that I am an impostor and things come to a free fight, to the point where you think you

must take a hand in the matter, you are to do nothing unless I give you the signal."

"All right. I understand."

"This is the point, Ten-Ichi: Nobody but myself can understand what my plans may be, and if you should act too soon, or without my desiring it, you might spoil everything. So the thing for you to do is to forget that I am Nick Carter. Forget that I am there at all. Make yourself believe that I am really Thomas Chelsea, and not Nick Carter."

"I will do all that, sir."

"You are not to remember that I am in existence unless I give you the signal. In that case, you will know how to act. The whole point of what I wish to accomplish to-night exists in the fact that we will both be there, and that we will be utterly independent of each other."

"Yes, sir."

"I want you, also, if you can, to forget that you are a detective. I want you to play your part well enough to make yourself believe that you are actually one of and with those devils, to enter into all their schemes and plans, and to become, for the time being, a veritable devil yourself."

"Yes, sir."

"And if for any reason I find that I want you to take the track of Dazaar, that archcriminal who has so far been able to keep out of our grasp, if Dazaar is there, as I feel he will be, I will sneeze five times in quick succession. Do you comprehend?"

"Perfectly."

"Five times, so that there can be no mistake. Anybody might sneeze three times, but few would go five. Now, that ends your instructions. Go to your room and get ready. Disguise yourself so that I won't know you myself, if you can."

"No hope of that, sir."

"Well, try it, anyhow. Go your own way. Work by yourself. Skip, now, for I want to talk with Patsy."

Ten-Ichi left the room, and the detective turned to the young Irishman.

"You know the house, Patsy?" he asked.

"That I do, chief."

"There is a little shoe-repair shop in the basement next door. Have you noticed it?"

"Sure. But I think it changed hands two days ago, because the fellow who was working there yesterday was not the same one——"

"Good, Patsy! You're all right. It has changed hands. I bought it out, rented the Italian who owned it another shop, and for two days I have been mending shoes myself."

"Then, by the powers!" exclaimed Patsy, slapping his knee in delight, "you have a pair of my own brogans mending them now, and I think I swore at you for not having them done."

"Correct, Patsy."

"And even I never suspected you!"

"How should you? But I have been doing something else than mending shoes. I have cut a very comfortable passageway between the cellar of that house and the next one."

"That's fine!" said Patsy.

"Now, Patsy, your play to-night is to fix yourself up as a young Italian, go to that shop, light your lamp—one will do—and heap all the shoes you can find around your

bench, then put on your apron and go to work. It is rather late to open up shop, but it is early enough for our purposes, for not one of this gang will show up before half past one, and other people can think what they please."

"I'm on, sir."

"While you are at work several customers will call. Each one will bring shoes for you to mend. If, while you are looking at them to see what repairing is necessary, your customer should disappear through the back part of your shop, don't worry about him. He will have business somewhere near that hole in the wall."

"Correct, sir."

"There should be five of them, and you will know them all by means of a chalk mark in the form of an X on the sole of one of the shoes that each one brings you to repair."

"And if one should show up without that letter X?"

"Don't let him get past you, that's all."

"And then, sir?"

"You are to close up shop at a quarter past two and go into the back part of the shop, where the men will be waiting for you. Take them to the cellar. I have provided each one with an electric flash light, and you had better take your own along with you."

"Is that all?"

"Not quite. I have examined the next house thoroughly, and I have discovered that the place selected for this meeting is in the back part of the cellar, which they have fitted up for the purpose."

"That back cellar is divided from the front portion by a heavy partition which is really a part of the foundation, put there to strengthen the building, which was intended for a factory."

"I understand, sir."

"The hole that I have cut through the wall communicates with the front cellar, and the means of communication between the front and back cellars is through a doorway which is closed by dropping an iron shutter."

"That is not an easy thing to open, is it?"

"It was not, until I fixed it. It was so arranged that it was impossible to open it from the outside after it had been closed from the inside, but I have changed all that. You will find an iron bar in the cellar of the house where your shop is situated; take that with you, and if you hear me call, 'Now, Patsy, now!' jam your bar behind the casing on the right side of the shutter, and the whole thing will fall to your feet. Do you understand me?"

"You bet your life I do!"

"The five men you will have with you are from the detective bureau at police headquarters; they will be in plain clothes, and they have been instructed to take their orders from you; and now, Patsy, here is the most important thing about your duties:

"There are old barrels and boxes in the front cellar, behind which you and your men can hide. You are to hide behind them as quickly as you can after you enter the cellar. You are to stay hidden until you hear my signal, and if you do not hear it, you are to remain hidden until you see me leave the cellar."

"You and the men are to maintain absolute silence, and if you stay there till doomsday, you are not to make a move unless I call—not even if you hear a row in progress."

"All right, chief."

"Now you skip, too. Open up your shop as soon as you can, for the men will begin to appear at one o'clock. Do you understand your duties thoroughly?"

"Perfectly, chief."

"Good. Mind that you live up to them."

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE LAIR OF THE DEVIL WORSHIPERS.

When Nick Carter arrived in front of the house where the meeting of the clique of the Devil Worshipers was to take place the street and the entire neighborhood seemed deserted.

Nor did the appearance of the house indicate that company was expected.

In fact, the only evidence of life to be seen in the neighborhood was in the shoe shop of the Italian, from the light of a solitary oil lamp gleaming forth into the darkness, and showing that the patient toiler was still at work, driving pegs into much worn footgear.

The detective glanced approvingly in upon that scene for a moment, and confessed to himself that Patsy's disguise was as perfect as it could be, and not once did the young man raise his eyes from the work upon which he was engaged.

"It takes a pretty cool detective to sit there and peg away at shoes and not once to attempt to gratify his curiosity by looking up to see who passes when he expects so many to pass," mused Nick. "No man could be blessed with better assistants than I have got, and I have never found one of them wanting yet."

Then the detective ascended the steps, turned the door-knob, and entered the hall, for there were no fastenings to bar his progress.

All was silence and darkness in front of him, but he stepped inside and closed the door behind him as he had been directed to do. Then, with his back against the door, he waited.

Not a sound greeted his ears as minute after minute passed in absolute darkness and utter stillness, but the detective knew that he was not to move nor speak until he was addressed, and so he waited. To break the first rule that had been imposed upon him would have been fatal to his further progress, and Nick Carter knew how to wait better than most men.

At last, after a silence that must have endured fully ten minutes, and which seemed like an hour to the waiting detective, a voice spoke to him out of the impenetrable darkness.

"Who are you, and what do you want here?" it demanded; and Nick, following out the instructions he had learned from Ten-Ichi, answered not a word.

"Who are you, I say?" the voice demanded again, and still Nick did not reply.

"Where did you come from?" was the next question.

No reply.

"What is your name?"

Silence was the only answer to that question.

"Have you business here?"

Still Nick was silent.

"In the devil's name have you lost your tongue?" demanded the voice.

"No," replied Nick. "I have it with me."

"Well, what do you want?"

No answer.

"Can't you speak?"

No answer.

"I see that you are all right. Follow us."

Steps sounded as the owner of the voice passed through the hall, but Nick did not move out of his tracks, and at the end of the hall, the owner of the voice paused and called back to him:

"Are you coming?"

Nick neither moved nor spoke.

"For goodness' sake come along," was the next command.

Nick stayed where he was.

"The devil take your reluctance and all your answers, too," muttered the voice in the darkness. "Are you coming?"

"Yes, I am coming now," said Nick. "When you speak as one who knows, I will follow you."

"Who do you wish to see?"

"The ruler of Hades."

"He is not here."

"But I am."

"Who, then, are you?"

"He whom I seek."

"Then, if you are he whom you seek, why have you come here in search of him?"

"I have business with him."

"Of what nature?"

Nick did not reply.

"Why, in Satan's name, don't you answer?"

"Because I have spoken five times since you uttered his name, and I will now speak only five times until you utter it again."

"Well, come with me."

A little point of light such as might be made by an electric scarpin showed at the end of the hall, and Nick advanced toward it, and in a moment more was following his guide down the stairs to the basement of the house.

There they presently emerged into a back room where there was no furniture save a square table upon which a lamp was burning.

Nick's conductor advanced to the opposite wall of the table and turned. Then he raised the lamp over his head so that the light fell full upon the detective's features, or rather upon the features he had borrowed for the occasion, with the help of his art, and Nick, by the light thus afforded, had an opportunity to discover something of the appearance of his guide.

He could see but little, however, for the man was enveloped in a dominolike cloak of bright scarlet, while over his head was drawn a pointed hood of the same hue. This latter entirely concealed his features, for, with the exception of two round holes through which his gleaming eyes could be seen, it completely covered his face.

"Write," he said to Nick, pushing a pad of paper and a pencil toward him.

"The wary never commit themselves to writing," replied Nick, without moving.

The conductor put the lamp upon the table, and, drawing back a little, said:

"Had you a name to give to me?"

"The devil's."

"None other?"

"My own name among men."

"What is that?"

"Thomas."

"And the remaining half of it?"

"Chelsea."

"It is well. Bare your left arm."

Nick stripped off his coat and cuffs, and then drew back his sleeve. Then his conductor stepped forward and gave him a quill pen.

"Write," he commanded, at the same time drawing a scroll from among his draperies and spreading it open upon the table.

Without an instant's hesitation, the detective drew his jackknife from his pocket and with it cut a quick but small gash in his arm, just sufficiently large to draw a little blood.

Then, taking the quill in his left hand, he smeared it in the blood, changed it back again to his right hand, and with it wrote upon the scroll the name of Thomas Chelsea.

Then, calmly, and with deliberation, he crushed the pen into a mass of pieces, threw it on the floor, and ground it under his foot until it had lost all semblance of its former self.

"Well done," said the conductor. "Now come with me."

He led the way out of the room by another door than the one through which they had entered it, and presently opening another, descended a flight of stairs which the detective knew must eventually lead them to the back cellar. There, he felt assured, the meeting was to be held.

Nor was he mistaken, for soon they crossed the front part of the cellar past the old barrels and boxes to which he had referred in his conversation with Patsy, and halted before the iron screen.

Against that the conductor struck one quick, sharp blow, whereupon another like blow was struck on the opposite side.

After that there was a wait of a minute, and then a second blow was struck, which was answered like the first, and this was continued until five blows had been given and returned, whereupon the screen was raised and they passed through.

When the iron screen dropped into place behind him, Nick realized that he was at last in the very lair of the Devil Worshipers, and indeed the spectacle that greeted his eyes might well have convinced him of the fact had nothing else occurred to demonstrate it.

There were exactly thirteen persons present, for Nick counted them quickly, wondering, when he had made out the number, if they were not the famous thirteen followers of Dazaar, and if he was to be the only novice present on that occasion. But then he remembered that he had appeared promptly at two o'clock, the hour appointed for the meeting, and that Ten-Ichi had told him that while it was forgiven to be somewhat late at a meeting, it was a deep offense to be ahead of time. If there were others coming, therefore, they were doubtless expected to arrive later.

In that surmise he was correct, as the events that followed demonstrated.

The thirteen who were present were arranged in a semicircle around a platform—that is, eleven of them were, for one stood beside the detective, and another occupied the platform, and toward this last individual Nick immediately turned his attention.

All the others were arrayed in the same dominolike robes

and hoods of scarlet as his conductor, but the individual who had been seated upon the thornlike chair on the platform and who rose when he entered, wore a costume that would have done credit to a genuine Mephistopheles, even to the tight-fitting garments, the long, pointed shoes, and the pronged horns upon his head.

Everything about his dress was a brilliant red, and even his face—for he wore no mask of any description—and hands were stained to the same color.

Altogether, he was an imposing and rather a terrible figure, and Nick, gazing upon him with all the concentrated powers of his penetration in play, thought to himself:

"I wonder if, at last, I am in the presence of the real Dazaar?"

CHAPTER V.

THE DEVIL'S UNEXPECTED GUEST.

With the exception of the fact that the head devil of the lot got upon his feet when Nick was ushered into the room, not another one there moved nor turned his head.

The detective glanced sharply at them in the effort to determine if they were men or women, or a mixture of both, but he could not decide.

Neither had he any means of knowing if Ten-Ichi were among them yet, for the reason that the costumes were all so precisely similar that one looked exactly like the other.

But he was only given a moment in which to think, for the man on the dais addressed him.

"Compatriot," he said, and Nick thought there was a cadence in the voice which was strangely familiar to his ears, although he could not determine where he had heard it before; he was only certain that it was disguised, and so perfectly that it defied discovery, if indeed he had ever heard it at all, "you have successfully passed through every preliminary step that is necessary to bring you here among us. Are you aware what penalty is demanded for coming here at all?"

"I know nothing till you tell me," replied Nick, for he knew that he was now expected to reply to every question addressed to him, and to select his own words for his answers.

"Death," was the solemn utterance of the person on the throne. "I do not mean by that that we will inflict that calamity upon you, but that death is the penalty which must eventually and of necessity come to us all. But also, my remark has another, and a more timely meaning, for it means that, having come this far into the secrets of our order, you cannot turn back, and that if you are found to be inimical to us in any way, your life will pay the forfeit.

"Have you any virtues of which you did not rid yourself before coming here?"

"I do not recall any at the present moment."

"Have you any regrets for coming here?"

"No. I think I can honestly assure you that I am mighty glad I came."

"Good. That is well answered. What was your own secret purpose in joining us?"

"Pure devilry, I think."

"That is also well answered, although the expression may have two meanings: one of levity and one of sincerity."

"I can assure you that I spoke in all sincerity."

"We will so accept the statement. Through whose influence were you induced to come here at all?"

"I was cautioned not to reply to that question."

"But you must reply to it?"

"Call it the devil's, then. That is the only answer you will get."

"Well said. Are you fully prepared to undergo the severe initiation, and in so doing to forswear every thought which hitherto you have held to be more or less sacred?"

"I am."

At that moment there was a summons upon the iron screen exactly like the one that Nick's guide had given, and the man on the dais said:

"There is another candidate—a woman. She is now waiting outside to be admitted, but before she comes among us, and while the signals are being exchanged, I have a warning to give you.

"All ideas of chivalry are left outside this order. This woman will suffer her initiation before you suffer yours, and I use the word suffer advisedly. You will now be enveloped in a robe like those which cover our companions. From this moment until I myself ask you to speak, you will not utter a sound or move from the chair which will be given you, you are to look upon it calmly and unflinchingly; and she will have much to endure."

Nick laughed outright, putting as much cruelty and recklessness into the tone of his voice as was possible, and, with a sneer, he said:

"I reckon, Mr. Devil, that I can stand as much as anybody here."

"Do you think so? We will try you; but it is best not to be boastful."

Nick shrugged his shoulders, and at this instant a robe and hood were thrown over his head.

Then, just as he was drawn backward into a chair between two of the hooded figures, the iron screen was raised and to the self-confessed surprise of the detective, the Countess of Croydon, a woman whom Nick had suspected of being a Devil Worshiper, was ushered into the room in much the same manner as he had been led to the place himself.

Nick noticed that she was frightfully pale and visibly nervous; but nevertheless she walked to the position where he had stood a moment before and replied to the questions that had been asked him in much the same manner that he had done; but he could not refrain from wondering how she had passed the ordeal in the darkness outside.

To the question if she were prepared to undergo the initiation of the Devil Worshipers she replied without hesitation, and two of the hooded members had stepped to her side with the evident intention of proceeding with the preliminaries of the ceremony, when, to the plainly evident surprise of all who were gathered there, another alarm was sounded against the iron screen which barred the entrance to the place.

Plainly this summons had neither been expected nor anticipated, for several of the hooded fraternity leaped to their feet, and even the head devil who sat upon the dais threw a glance rapidly around the room as if he were engaged in making a hasty count of those who were present.

A long time was allowed to elapse before any notice was taken of the summons—so long, indeed, that any

person other than one who understood the significance of waiting must have lost patience and sounded a second alarm.

But whoever it was outside the door, he made no sound whatever, while all within the room maintained perfect silence while the minutes ticked themselves away until fully a quarter of an hour had elapsed since the alarm.

Then it was the horned devil on the dais stepped down and advanced toward the iron screen; and upon reaching it, instead of rapping loudly, as had been done in the cases of the entrance of Nick, and of the Countess of Croydon, he hit upon it, one light tap with the tips of his fingers, making a sound so faint that the detective wondered if it could be heard by the person who was waiting, and who, he now had no doubt, was Ten-Ichi, for it was plainly apparent to the detective that the individual outside had not been expected by the members of the clique.

Instantly there was a resounding whack against the screen on the other side, which was as quickly responded to, inside, by one that was equally loud, and then all was silent again, and the minutes dragged themselves along as slowly as they had done after the sounding of the first alarm.

So, when about an equal lapse of time had intervened, there came an answering tap like the one first given in response by the horned chief on the inside, and then the signal was given to raise the shutter.

It was evident that whoever it was that waited for admittance, he was entitled to sit among them, for while the screen was drawn up the members of the order resumed their seats, so that when Ten-Ichi did step past the barrier the appearance of the place was precisely the same as it had been when Nick—and later when the countess—had entered.

No, there was one difference, for in the excitement of apprehension that had attended them all alike with the exception of the detective, not one of the members had remembered to throw a hood and cloak over the now trembling form of the countess.

Thus it was that when Ten-Ichi entered the room she was standing in the very center of the place and almost alone, and with not a suggestion of extra covering to conceal her identity.

Ten-Ichi had not advanced half a dozen steps ere he discovered her, and he came to an abrupt stop, and, raising one arm, pointed his finger at her threateningly.

Instantly two of the members leaped forward and threw a cloak and hood upon her, whereat Ten-Ichi bowed his head, stretched out his hands to receive another of the dominoes for his own covering, and, having adjusted it, sank into a chair as if utterly oblivious of his surroundings.

Before he wrapped the cloak around him and covered his head with the hood, all had an opportunity to see him, and there was not one who did not regard him as a very old man, although, strange to say, that effect had not been produced either by wig or beard, for he wore neither.

As Nick looked upon his assistant, even he wondered at the art of the young Jap.

When he entered the room everything about him indicated that he was a small, worn, bent, parchment-skinned, shriveled old man, and the effects had been produced so dexterously that even a close and careful observer would have found it difficult to detect an evidence of fraud.

It seemed, when he took his seat, as if every eye in the room were centered upon him through the slits in the hoods, and after a moment of silence, the person on the dais who wore the horns asked him in English who he was.

For reply, Ten-Ichi rose slowly to his feet, and after a period of silent waiting, as if to lend added impression and emphasis to what he said, he addressed the presiding officer rapidly, and in a language which was unknown even to Nick Carter, and which, therefore, he correctly assumed to be Tibetan, for that was one of the very few languages of the earth which he did not understand perfectly.

During five minutes after that there were rapid questions and answers between the two, after which Ten-Ichi resumed his seat and the chief said to the others in English:

"I find, my compatriots, that we have an unexpected guest among us, who, having discovered our signals, has come here to make himself known to us to-night. He is far advanced in the secrets of our order, and hails from a country that is far away; but here we know no country or allegiance, save to our satanic master, and I, therefore, command that you receive him as one who is greater than all of us, save myself. We will now proceed at once with the initiation of the woman. Madam, stand forth."

The Countess of Croydon raised herself very slowly to her feet, and instantly the cloak and hood were stripped from her.

Then she was seized on either side and marched across the floor of the cellar to a low platform not larger than the top of an ordinary library table and of about one foot in height.

Obedying her conductor, she stood upon the platform, and faced the company.

Directly behind her was a shield-shaped board.

Her skirts were drawn tightly around her ankles, while a strap was passed across them and buckled firmly to the shield-shaped board. Another strap was fastened across her waist in the same manner, and still another one pinioned her white throat. Then her arms were stretched out at right angles from her body, and other straps pinioned them to the shield at elbows and wrists, and so she stood before them against the black background of the shield, white and terrified.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHIEF OF THE DEVIL'S CLIQUE.

"What form of mania is it that can beset a good woman, to induce her to place herself voluntarily in such a position as this one?" was an interesting question that the detective asked of himself, but to which he could find no satisfactory answer.

Notwithstanding the fact that she had voluntarily brought the surrounding conditions upon herself, Nick could not help experiencing a sensation of genuine pity for the beautiful woman as she stood there against the black background of the huge shield, pinioned to it by the unyielding straps so that she could not move the fraction of an inch.

She was very beautiful, too, and strikingly so, now that all the blood seemed to have forsaken her face and left her as white as alabaster.

But it was plain that she had nerved herself for the ordeal, whatever it might be, and was resolved not to flinch, for, although the detective could see that she trem-

bled in spite of her resolutions, she still faced them with a sneer of defiance which she had assumed to conceal her terror.

"What next?" thought Nick; but he was soon to know what was to follow.

The cloaked and hooded figures rose from their chairs, crossed to the farther end of the cellar, and quickly divested themselves of their robes and hoods.

Nick then saw that one and all of them were disguised like the man on the throne, in red, skin-fitting garments, pointed shoes, horned headpieces, and red-stained faces and hands.

He alone had retained his place and his domino costume, but he was quickly seized and led across the room with the others. There he was placed in a chair, the cloak and hood were taken from him, and he found himself seated in the disguise he wore when he entered the place, and which his companions believed to be his natural person, facing the beautiful and now panting woman who was strapped to the shield against the wall.

Next, a long, benchlike table was dragged from another corner and placed across the floor beside him, and then he began to understand, for when the canvas with which it was covered was drawn aside he saw that the table was covered with a litter of daggers of the same design and pattern as those affected by Dazaar.

There seemed to be at least a hundred of them in the heap upon the table, and the light from the dozen lamps in the place gleamed upon them so that they made him think of a mass of reptiles bunched and coiled together.

Having placed the table in position, the men drew back and formed in line behind it a few feet away, and the chief descended slowly from the dais, and, advancing to the table, seized one of the knives and hurled it, without any apparent aim, straight at the shrinking form of the woman against the shield.

The dagger grazed the top of her head, burying its point into the shield behind her so close to her crown that it was lost in the masses of her hair; and the countess, in spite of her resolutions, uttered a piercing shriek of terror.

To her cry, however, not even the slightest attention was paid.

The chief turned away after he had thrown the dagger, and a second man stepped forward. He also seized a dagger and hurled it, with the same seeming carelessness of aim, but it nevertheless flew true to its mark, for it stuck, quivering and vibrant, close against the fingers of the woman's right hand.

Again she shrieked, and again no notice was taken of her.

A third person advanced and hurled another dagger, which entered the shield close to the tips of the fingers of the woman's left hand; a fourth and fifth entered the board beneath her arms on either side; a sixth and seventh, just above them; and then, one after another they followed down either side of her body to her feet until she was standing between a double row of glittering knives which had been thrown around her from a distance of thirty feet; and yet there were many spaces that had not been filled, and there was still a huge heap of the weapons upon the table.

All this time the chief had thrown but the one knife, and Ten-Ichi, the stranger, had thrown none. But now

the chief advanced again, and, having selected two of the daggers from the table, he stood with them poised in his hands while he addressed a few words in that unknown tongue to Ten-Ichi.

Having received a satisfactory reply, he advanced to the table, raised the daggers in the air and then with a quick and unerring motion, launched them both forward at the same instant, performing a feat that is almost too difficult to comprehend, for, with the accuracy of rifle balls, they flew to their selected marks, and in another instant had buried their points close beside the cheeks and immediately beneath the lobes of the woman's ears.

The scream which the countess uttered had hardly died away when Ten-Ichi took the place of the chief of the devils at the table, and with apparent unconcern also seized upon two of the weapons.

Then, having placed four others within easy reach, and with their points toward him, he threw them, two at a time, until the six were thrown, and so rapidly that it seemed as if the air was filled with flying knives, and he placed them all close beside the ones that had been thrown by the chief.

"By Jove!" thought Nick. "The little Jap is enough for him at that."

Then he turned his eyes in the direction of the woman against the shield, and he saw that she had fainted. But even though she was unconscious, the straps which bound her to the wall held her firmly in position, and the hilts of the daggers which surrounded her head had prevented it from falling forward, so that she hung there, unconscious, a veritable cross of daggers.

With a bound, the detective leaped to his feet and started toward her, careless of the promise he had made to remain silent and motionless throughout the ordeal with which the countess had to contend, but he had not taken the second step ere the chief of the devils, bending forward, had seized another of the daggers and hurled it with terrific velocity full at him.

It was done so quickly that had Ten-Ichi sought to prevent it, he could not have done so, and it was just as well that he did not make the effort, for, as events proved, Nick Carter was equal to the emergency.

He had not fairly left his chair ere he remembered the injunction that had been placed upon him, and instinctively he realized what was coming, so that with that second step he took, he ducked his head.

The dagger, which had been hurled so that it would turn and strike him with the hilt foremost, flew harmlessly over his head, grazing him as it passed, but it caught the man who had risen to bar his way exactly between the eyes, and he went to the floor like a stricken bullock.

The detective did not know how many more daggers might follow the first one, and he acted as he always did, instantaneously.

With the same motion he made when he dodged the flying dagger, he turned and leaped like a tiger cat, straight back again to the table whereon the daggers were heaped, and beside which the chief of the devils was standing. And before that individual could seize upon another weapon, he was seized in the relentless grasp of Nick Carter, borne to his knees, and the point of one of his own weapons was pressed threateningly against his throat.

It all happened within the fraction of a second, and before another person in that cellar room could make a

move to prevent it; and when it did happen, they all stood steadfastly in their places, for the clear voice of the detective rang out in no unmistakable emphasis.

"Stand fast, all of you," he shouted. "At the first move in this direction, I will bury this dagger in your master's throat!"

There was no doubt that he meant what he said, and they obeyed him; and Nick noticed with pleasure and pride that Ten-Ichi remembered the orders that had been given him, and also remained perfectly still.

But that was not all that was revealed to Nick Carter by the quick and dexterous move he had made.

In seizing the chief of that devilish crew, and forcing him to his knees, the detective made another discovery and one which was more of a surprise to him than he would have cared to admit.

The mere touch of his hands upon the person of the chief of the devils was the open sesame to his understanding, and when there was added to the soft thrill that went through him as he seized upon the arms and shoulders of the chief, was added the fact that there was no resisting strength to offer itself against his own, he knew that he had his hands upon a woman, and he was instantly convinced that the chief of the Devil's Clique was none other than Irma Plavatski, the Russian countess whom the great detective had been tracking for some time, and of whom readers of recent issues of this weekly are well acquainted.

But with the same instant that he made the discovery, he determined that he would not let it be known that he had done so, and, releasing his hold, he stepped back again, but still with the dagger poised in his hand, prepared for any emergency that might arise.

"May I apologize to your highness?" he asked, with seeming humility. "I did what I have done because I thought my life in danger, and in the country where I was reared we are always quick to defend ourselves."

To his surprise it was Ten-Ichi who replied to him, and not the one whom he addressed.

The Jap stepped forward quickly, and, holding out one of his apparently withered hands, demanded sternly:

"Give me that dagger!"

Without a word, Nick obeyed him.

"Now resume your seat," he added, and again the detective obeyed, for he saw through the wisdom of Ten-Ichi's act, which was intended to assure him that there would be no resentment against his act, and also to afford the chief time to return to the dais.

If Irma Plavatski was aware that the novice whom she believed to be Thomas Chelsea had penetrated her disguise, she did not make the matter manifest, for, rising to her feet, and acting as if the incident had not taken place, she resumed her throne-like seat with matchless imperturbability, and, having done so, quickly ordered that the countess be taken down from the shield.

In a moment more she was released. Restoratives were applied to her, and presently she opened her eyes, gazed vacantly around her, shuddered, and closed them again, and it immediately became plain to Nick that she had suffered a shock to her nerves from which she would not soon recover.

"Now, Thomas Chelsea," said Irma, speaking in the disguised voice she assumed so well, "it is your turn. You saw the woman strapped to the board so that she could not move, but you will stand there without straps to

hold you, while my daggers make a cross around your form, and if you so much as move or flinch, or if you faint from terror, as the woman did, the next one thrown will pierce your heart."

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING OF KNIFE THROWERS.

For just one instant, while the men were starting forward to remove the daggers from the black shield against the wall, the thought flashed through Nick Carter's mind that his disguise might have been penetrated and that by taking his position against the shield, he might be voluntarily giving up his life, and in that instant he hesitated, wondering if it would not be perhaps better to call the signal to Patsy, whom he well knew must by that time have taken up his position in the other part of the cellar with the men he had ordered to be there.

But to call upon them now he knew would be to bring about an unnecessary loss of life, for the men who were gathered around him in the back cellar were all armed, he knew, and he had no doubt that they would fight desperately.

For one instant also he permitted his glance to rest upon Ten-Ichi, who was experienced in these devilish ceremonies, but the young wisacre made no sign, but sat blinking at the lights and the scenes around him as if he were oblivious of sights and sounds alike.

That decided Nick, and he arose, crossed the room, mounted the small platform, and, placing his back against the shield, from which the daggers that had been thrown around the form of the countess had now been removed, faced the company.

"Fire away," he said scornfully. "I reckon I can stand it if you can, but I just want to give the whole outfit here one word of warning."

Irma, in her character of Chief of the Clique, smiled. It was plainly to be seen that she admired the dare-devil spirit of the breezy Westerner, and it was also evident that she had no suspicion that her disguise had been penetrated, and that this stranger believed her to be other than what she represented—a man, and the chief of the Devil Worshipers.

"A warning?" she said. "It is not for you to warn, but to take warning. Nevertheless, we will hear what you have to say. What is it?"

"This: I'm not made of the sort of stuff that likes to be made a plaything of. If you stand me up there and shoot knives at me simply for the purpose of trying my nerve, and to see if I can stand it without flinching, well and good. I'll go through it like a man, but I'll tell you right now that I wouldn't give a rap to be a devil among you, unless I can be as big and bad a one as any of you."

"Very good. What more, sir?"

"This: If any of you have got the idea in your heads that you are going to have fun with me, and it is your intention to prick me once in the while with those daggers, let me advise you not to try it on, because it won't work."

"Explain what you mean."

"I mean that I shall watch every one of you while you sling those weapons into the board around me, and that if one of you should draw a drop of my blood in doing

it, I'll draw a cupful of his when the performance is over."

"You speak bravely for one who is about to put his very life in jeopardy."

"Oh, I know that you have no intention of killing me. That wouldn't pay, and you have more reason to keep me alive than you have to murder me."

"I've given you this warning," continued the detective grimly, "only because I don't care to be made fun of, so don't try it."

"Now go ahead," said Nick, without a tremor, "and when you are through, I'll show you that I can do a little knife throwing myself, if you have got the courage to stand up here in my place."

Just here the bent and withered figure of the disguised Ten-Ichi rose from the chair, moved forward across the space that separated him from the dais upon which Irma was seated, and knelt before the throne. Then, with his hands clasped together behind his back and his head bent forward so that his chin rested on his bosom, he spoke rapidly in that unknown dialect of Tibet while Irma listened attentively.

Nick, glancing hastily toward the others, discovered that one and all of them seemed to understand what was being said, for they were bending forward eagerly, as if drinking in each word that was uttered.

Instantly he came to the conclusion that the entire crew, with the exception of himself, Ten-Ichi, and the Countess of Croydon, was made up of the satellites of Dazaar. Nick also decided that the archfiend, Dazaar, was not a man, had never been a man, but was no other than Irma herself, and that the men with whom he had come in contact, and each of whom he had at times thought might be the archfiend himself, were mere tools and puppets of hers.

"What a fortunate move it was for me to come to this place in person instead of trusting it all to Ten-Ichi," he thought, as he turned his eyes in the direction of the countess, only to discover that she was still lying upon the improvised couch of boards that they had arranged for her, and that she was staring at the assemblage with wide-open, but uncomprehensive and glassy, eyes.

The ordeal through which she had passed had proved altogether too much for her, and her mind had become, for the time being at least, a blank.

When Ten-Ichi completed his declamation, Irma turned again to Nick.

"Our friend, here, wishes to give an exhibition of his ability as a knife thrower," she said, "and I am disposed to let him do so. What say you?"

"It would appear that I have very little to say in the matter," replied Nick.

"Are you willing?"

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"If you are willing, so am I," he replied, "only if it happens that he doesn't understand the English language, you might repeat to him what I said about pricking me with the knives."

"I have already done that."

"Then let him go ahead. I don't care."

"You are a brave man, sir."

"I wouldn't be here at all if I were not."

"True; quite true."

She waved to Ten-Ichi to take his place at the table where the knives had been heaped up again, and were

awaiting him, and he walked to his place with an unsteady tottering in his gait that might have made even Nick Carter think twice if he had not known that inside that bent and withered form, Ten-Ichi lived.

Here was a case where each man depended fully upon the nerve of the other, and there would have been no better test in either case than the one that was now about to be made.

On Ten-Ichi's part, the very miracle that he was about to perform with the flying knives depended for its success, as much upon the nerve of the detective as upon his own accuracy and cunning with the weapons, for if he should move from the position he assumed in the beginning, his life would pay the forfeit, and Ten-Ichi would be his slayer.

On Nick's part, he had to place his life unreservedly in the skill of his young assistant. He had to have full confidence in the ability of the Jap to perform what he set out to accomplish, and there could have been no greater test of confidence than this.

Ten-Ichi's first care was to arrange the daggers to suit him, and that was done by placing them in a regular line across the table in front of him, piling them in pyramidal heaps so that the points were toward him, and, that done to his satisfaction, he was ready.

Then he bared his arms to the shoulders, and, uttering a shrill, hissing sound, as if of warning, he commenced his performance.

There have been wonderful exhibitions of knife throwing in various parts of the world, but there was never anything like that one anywhere, before or since.

With the rapidity, and almost with the precision, of the ticking of a watch, Ten-Ichi's hands rose and fell from the board in front of him, and each time they came up gleaming daggers flew from his finger tips toward Nick.

They struck against the boards that formed the shield, with a spat, spat, spat, spat, that was continuous, unceasing, and as regular as clockwork, and between the table and the platform, where Nick stood, there seemed to flow one unending stream of fire where the light from the lamps glistened upon the knives as they flew across the intervening space.

As fast as the tongue could count them, they left Ten-Ichi's hands and struck against the shield.

They began at the crown of Nick Carter's head, and they crept downward, past his ears, beside his cheeks, along his throat and shoulders on either side, then out along his outstretched arms, around his finger tips and back again to his armpits; thence down his sides and hips, along his legs and back again between them to the height of his knees, in one continuous stream of metallic light. And then, as suddenly as they began, they stopped. The supply was exhausted.

So was Ten-Ichi, apparently, for the instant the last knife was thrown he tottered to a chair, and, sinking upon it, buried his face in his hands.

At the same instant a round of applause sprang simultaneously from every person in the room—that is, from all save Nick himself, for he had stepped away from the shield, and, having turned his back upon all present, was studying the knives critically.

Not a point had touched him, although many had come so close to his flesh in entering the wood that he had plainly felt their touches. Nevertheless, he had not lost a drop of blood.

But another, and what seemed to him to be an excellent, idea occurred to him while he stood there gazing upon the daggers, for in a flash it came to him that every weapon in the room, with the possible exception of others that might be concealed upon the persons of those present, was sticking in the board.

He was between them and the men who might make use of them if they happened to be within reach, and he wondered, while he thought of it in that instantaneous flash, if Ten-Ichi could have had such an idea in his head when he volunteered to give an exhibition of this wonderful skill.

Instantly the detective's resolution was taken, and when he wheeled and faced those in the room again, a revolver was grasped in either hand, and they swayed to and fro menacingly.

There was nothing, however, that was menacing in the expression of Nick Carter's face. Instead, it was smiling blandly, and when he saw the men in devil's dresses spring to their feet in consternation at his attitude, he smiled the broader.

Ten-Ichi did not move. He did not seem to comprehend what was taking place at all.

It was Irma Plavatski who spoke first, and so disturbed the tableau.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" she demanded.

"Nothing at all, your majesty," replied Nick, laughing pleasantly, "only that as you have all tried my nerve, it is my turn now to try yours. You have given me an exhibition with knives, and now, if you don't, one and all, do as I say, I will give you one with these little guns that you will not soon forget.

"First, Mr. Devil, I want that chap who threw these knives to walk up here and help me with my exhibition, and if I don't give you a better entertainment than he did—well, you watch my smoke."

CHAPTER VIII.

DAZAAR IS TRAPPED AT LAST.

Nick's manner and the tone in which he uttered the words that accompanied, entirely disarmed any suspicions that Irma and her followers might for an instant have entertained.

It seemed to be made plain to her, and to them also, that this was simply an exhibition of the character of the man whom they had asked to become a member of their clique.

He did not fear them—he had proved that much already—and not one of their unholy proceedings awed him in the least. He was simply—to them—a dare-devil character which found amusement instead of terror in their society, and they were not ill-pleased, for such an experience was an innovation.

Nick had, however, made another discovery through this last move, and that was that the men who were seated about the room were probably unarmed; in short, that they depended upon the knives that were sticking in the boards behind him for their weapons.

He knew, by the evidence of his own eyesight, how dexterous they were, one and all, with the daggers, and what dangerous weapons they became in their hands—more threatening even than pistols, because they were silent, and quite as deadly. But just now those knives were safely

beyond the reach of the men, and he did not propose that they should get their hands upon them again that night.

How he had determined to carry out that plan we shall see.

Irma turned toward Ten-Ichi when Nick made the demand that he come forward.

"You understand English?" she asked.

"I do."

"You heard the request of our compatriot?"

"I did."

"Are you willing to assist him?"

"I am."

"Then go forward and do as he bids you."

"Am I commanded to do so?"

"Not if you are afraid."

"I have no fear."

"Then go."

Ten-Ichi rose in his place and ambled forward toward the platform, and in the meantime Nick stepped from it to the floor and pulled it away from the wall so that there was a space behind it sufficiently large to receive the knives.

To do that, he was obliged to turn his back to the audience for a moment, but he had no fear in doing so, for he saw plainly that their fears were dispelled, and that they had no thought of treachery, or that either Ten-Ichi or himself were other than they appeared to be.

"Stand upon the platform," he demanded of the seeming old man, "and in order that I may not spoil any of the pretty weapons you use so well, draw them from the shield and drop them, for the present, behind the platform. Will you do it alone, or shall I help you in any way?"

"I will do it alone, since it is your desire. I am stronger than I look, and not so old as I appear."

"Indeed!" laughed Nick. Then, turning toward Irma, and bowing as he did so, while Ten-Ichi busied himself with the knives, he added:

"Did you hear that? He is not so weak as he looks nor so old as he appears. Have you faith, good Satan, in his verity as a Devil Worshiper?"

"Surely," she replied, "else he would not have been permitted to remain with us."

"But how do you know that? He seemed to be a stranger when he came in here, and it appeared that he was not expected."

Nick was only killing time, but he was doing it amazingly well.

"He is a stranger, and he was not expected, but I know him to be one of us," replied Irma.

"Faith, he threw the knives as if he had had experience," laughed Nick.

"Well, he has drawn them all, now," replied Irma, for Ten-Ichi had dropped the last one behind the platform, "and we are ready for the exhibition you have promised to give us."

"It will surprise you, I warrant," said Nick. "But first let me push this platform back into place. So."

Ten-Ichi had stepped from the platform, and Nick quickly pushed it back again against the wall, effectually covering the knives, and so putting them beyond the reach of anybody in the room.

"Now, Sir Chieftain of this most devilish company," he said, addressing Irma, who was lying back comfortably

in her chair upon the dais, "I will ask you to step this way, if you please."

"For what purpose?" she demanded, starting a little at Nick's request.

"In order to explain to you what I am about to do." Then he laughed again, and, with a touch of irony in his voice, he added:

"Is it possible that you are afraid of what I may, do?"

"Afraid? I fear nothing on earth or in Hades."

"Nor in heaven?" asked Nick.

"Bah!" she said.

"Then come here."

She descended from the dais and crossed the floor to the platform.

"Now, Sir Chieftain," drawled Nick, in a tone that was meant to dare her to comply with his wishes, and to make it appear that he believed her afraid to do so, "I will ask you to take your place against the shield, if you please, and to suffer the straps to be buckled across you, so that you cannot move, even as you did with that poor woman, who has not even yet recovered from the shock of the experience."

"Why? I thought you were to give the exhibition with the aid of our compatriot, here."

"So I am; but the act requires two persons besides myself."

"Very well, strap me fast, if you will."

"I will ask our friend, here, to do it for me. Sir, if you will be so kind," and the detective waved his hand to Ten-Ichi in a commanding manner.

Irma placed her back against the shield, and Ten-Ichi, without an instant's loss of time, buckled the straps in their places, attending to it that each one was securely fastened, and sufficiently tight so that she could not by any possibility free herself. Then, turning to the detective, he bowed and announced that his work had been accomplished.

"Good!" said Nick. "If it is done, it is well done."

Then, calmly turning his back upon Irma, who, was regarding him with wondering eyes, and addressing the others in the room, who were also looking on in amazement, he asked:

"How many of you here understand English? One may speak for all."

Irma replied for them from behind Nick.

"Not one of them," she said. "They are Tibetans, all of them. Many of them speak a little Russian, some of them speak Chinese, and a few can understand Japanese, but not one among them all understands or speaks English."

"Indeed!" said Nick. "That is strange. Are there no Devil Worshipers in this country?"

Irma did not reply, and it became evident to Nick that she was losing her confidence in him, for she raised her voice and spoke rapidly in the Tibetan tongue.

Ten-Ichi, however, understood, of course, and with apparent unconcern he translated the words to Nick, in an undertone, almost as soon as they were uttered.

"The chief says that he does not entirely trust you, and that they are to watch you closely and to rush forward at the first sign of treachery," he said.

Nick laughed, and in the same tone replied:

"Inform Madame Plavatski that she had much better warn them to keep their places, for the first one who ad-

vances a step in this direction will drop dead in his tracks with a bullet in his brain.

"Inform her, also," the detective continued, "that the game is up. Tell her also that I am not Thomas Chelsea, but Nick Carter, her most affectionate friend. Tell her, also, that you are not what you seem, but are here to assist me. Tell her, also, that we have found the great Dazaar at last, and that he—or, rather, she—is strapped to the wall behind us, where she cannot move. Tell her that in another moment the iron shutter, which separates this part of the cellar from the other, will fall from its place, and that in the aperture will stand a few trusted men who are in my employ, and who are here to assist me in conducting this entire crew to jail, and from there, when the time shall come, to the hangman, or the electric chair. Tell her——"

He got no further, for at that instant Irma uttered an unintelligible cry, which, however, seemed to be perfectly understood by her followers, for they acted upon it instantly.

CHAPTER IX.

A BATTLE IN INFERNAL REGIONS.

Notwithstanding the fact that the detective stood upon the platform facing them, and that he held a trusty revolver in either hand with which he was menacing them, the men did not hesitate to act when Irma Plavatski's cry rang through the room.

It was evidently a warning cry concerning which they had been well drilled, and they responded to it with a swiftness that would have done credit to experienced soldiers.

With such promptness did they act, in fact, that in the twinkling of an eye the lights of the room crashed to the floor and the cellar was shrouded in utter darkness.

And yet, not one of the men seemed to have moved from his place, for, had one of them done so, Nick Carter would have kept his word, and fired, for he was resolved that the lives of a few Tibetans, more or less, should not stand in the way of his capture of Dazaar, who, he was now convinced, was one and the same with Irma Plavatski.

It has been said that there were twelve lamps in the cellar room, and it must also be explained that not one of them was within reach of the men where they were grouped together, facing the platform upon which their chief had so inanely permitted herself to be strapped into helplessness.

Nevertheless, every lamp was shattered to the floor and extinguished at the selfsame instant, demonstrating the fact that whenever, and wherever, the Devil Worshipers chose to hold one of their meetings, arrangements were made in anticipation of possible interruption.

Nick realized, the instant the lights went out, that they must have been connected with one another by cords, and that the principle cord, which would extinguish them all, had been extended around the room in such a manner as to be within easy reach from any part of it at any moment.

It was a moment in which quick thought and quicker action were as necessary as breath itself, for the maintenance of life, for Nick Carter knew that the first dash the men made would be to liberate their chief, or their queen,

whichever name they chose to call her, and that whoever should stand in the way of their success would stand but small chance in opposing himself against their united strength and numbers.

Never, perhaps, in his entire career, had his own mighty strength and daring been put to such a test as was comprehended in the task that was set for him at that moment, and never, as he frequently stated to his friends afterward, had he acted with clearer perceptions of the necessities of the moment, than then.

In order to understand perfectly what he accomplished, it must be remembered that he was at that instant standing near the front of the platform, facing the followers of Dazaar, and that Irma Plavatski—or Dazaar, as the detective now believed her to be—was strapped to a huge shield which rested upon the platform and which leaned against the wall of the cellar; also that Ten-Ichi was near at hand.

This, then, in a few words, is what happened:

The instant that Irma gave her warning cry, and even in that brief space of time which intervened before the lamps crashed to the floor, Nick shouted out the call that had been agreed upon between himself and Patsy.

"Now, Patsy, now!" he called.

Then, with the crashing of the lamps and the instantaneous darkness which followed, Nick turned and leaped toward the shield, which was not more than four feet from where he was standing.

Stooping a little, for the shield was narrower as it approached the floor, he found that with his arms outstretched he could just reach across it so that his fingers closed around the opposite edges, and then, with a gigantic effort, he lifted it, together with the added weight of the woman who was strapped to it, bodily from the platform.

He then stepped quickly to the right and down upon the floor, and, turning, so that the back of the shield was toward the room and therefore toward the advancing men—so that his own form was pressed against Irma's, and the shield was therefore between them and the Tibetans—he backed into the corner and placed his burden again upon the floor.

It was all accomplished in less than two seconds of time, but his task was not entirely done, even then, for he realized that Irma Plavatski must be silenced.

Indeed, she had already cried out for help twice by the time he had reached the corner, but the tumult in the cellar was so great that her voice had not been heard, and even if it had reached the ears of her followers, they would not have been able to locate the sound.

But Nick did not intend that she should utter a third call for help—and she did not.

The instant he placed the shield upon the floor, Nick's vial of chloroform was drawn from one of his pockets and the contents were emptied upon the small handkerchief he carried with it.

Pressing it quickly and firmly over Irma Plavatski's nose and mouth, and with the other hand compelling her to breathe, and so inhale the fumes, scarcely a perceptible time elapsed before he knew that she was beyond the power of summoning aid to her again.

Then he stooped and passed from beneath the shield to confront the men again, for he knew that he had left Ten-Ichi in dire peril.

But brief as had been the time from the moment he seized the shield and Irma and carried them to the corner until he stepped out again from behind its shelter, much had happened.

The room, which an instant before had been in utter darkness, was now ablaze with light, and it was that sort of light which struck awe and terror to the hearts of the Tibetans—a light of deepest emerald green.

Even Nick Carter came to a momentary halt, amazed at what he saw.

The Tibetans, arrested in the very act of rushing forward, by that terrible glare of green flaming in their eyes, came to a halt and huddled themselves together in the center of the room, terrified by what they saw, for the glare itself was only a part of it.

And over at the doorway, where the iron shutter had been torn from its fastenings and hurled to the floor, five stalwart men, led by fearless Patsy, halted in consternation just inside the threshold, spellbound and for an instant paralyzed by the spectacle they saw.

To explain what had happened and how it happened, we must return for one moment to Ten-Ichi at the instant when the lights went out and Nick Carter seized upon the shield and carried it, with its burden, from the platform to the corner.

Ten-Ichi, as we know, was not inexperienced with Devil Worshipers.

There was very little connected with their ceremonies that he did not know, and had not learned fully and completely in his own country and in Tibet, which is the home of Devil Worshipers, and before going to that cellar at all he had prepared himself for any emergency that he thought might possibly arise, and particularly for the one which had arisen, and which he had actually anticipated.

Remembering his instructions to act independently of the detective and to govern himself precisely as if he were alone and unaided, he did the very thing that he had intended to do, when he believed that nobody would be at hand to help him.

The instant the lamps were smashed and the lights went out he leaped upon the platform, and, drawing a paper package from one of his pockets, emptied its contents at his feet.

To strike a match and drop it upon the powder that had been contained in the package was the work of an instant, and then, when a dense volume of emerald green smoke, so brilliant that it dazzled the eyes, shot upward from the center of the platform where he had lighted the powder, he stepped backward again, and took a second package from another pocket.

Even in that instant he noticed that the shield, with its prisoner strapped upon it, had disappeared, but he did not delay in the work he had to do.

A quick motion opened the package into an accordion-like arrangement which resembled a camera more than anything else, and the flame of another match lighted a magnesium wire that it contained, and this lighted instrument he held high over his head, pointing it at the mass of emerald-green smoke.

The effect was astounding, and it was not surprising that Tibetans and white men alike were amazed and for a moment stupefied by the spectacle.

From the spot where Ten-Ichi was standing nothing

more than the smoke of his green fire could be seen, but he perfectly understood the nature of the view obtained from the other side of it.

Inside the instrument, which for want of a better name we will call a camera, there was a set of a dozen slides which worked upon a spring which the operator had only to touch to set in motion, and the light from the burning magnesium wire threw a reflection of those pictures on the slides, enlarged so that the figures seemed like giants, upon the smoke.

And the pictures were awful to contemplate.

They were scenes of many devils fighting among themselves. They were clawing, tearing, biting, stabbing, writhing, and twisting this way and that, and the dozen scenes with which the camera was supplied, changed with the rapidity of the scenes of a cinematograph, for they were arranged upon a disk, where they revolved with the rapidity of thought.

From that part of the room that was in front of the green smoke it seemed as if the gates of the inferno had been rent assunder, and that all the horrible creatures which infest the place and render the very thought of it a terror to mankind had engaged in a terrific warfare among themselves.

So perfect was the representation that it seemed as if the shouts and cries, the curses and moans, the shrieks and horrible epithets of the war in the inferno could be heard, and so gigantic were the figures that fought and tore at each other's throats against the rolling and tumbling smoke of the emerald-green fire, that the spectators stood before the awful scenes, trembling, and even the detective, although he stood where he could see Ten-Ichi at work behind it all, was astounded beyond words.

But he knew that it could last but a moment; that the green fire upon which the terrible pictures were thrown must soon die out, and so lose its effect.

He waited, however, until he knew that the fire was approaching its end, and then he called to Patsy and his men at the door.

"Ready, now! Lights, all!" he shouted, and at the same instant he pulled his own electric flash light from his pocket, pressed the spring, and threw its glaring and dazzling brilliancy against the Tibetans.

At that instant, too, the light of the green fire disappeared as if by magic, for Ten-Ichi, hearing the voice of Nick, threw a second powder upon the blaze, which extinguished it instantly.

But the room was not in darkness as it had been before, for there were eight bright electric lights in the hands of Nick Carter, his two assistants, and the five plain-clothes men, bearing full upon the now thoroughly demoralized Tibetans.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROPHECY OF DAZAAR.

If the men, headed by Patsy, who had waited in the outside cellar for the moment to break their way through the iron shutter to the assistance of Nick Carter, expected a fight, they were doomed to disappointment, for there was not a suggestion of fight left in the hearts of the Tibetan followers of Dazaar.

Ten-Ichi's magic had effectually taken out of them what little they might have had left, but it is safe to

say that with the disappearance of their chief, or, as we know her, Irma Plavatski, they were without a leader, and, therefore, helpless.

That she had disappeared they did not seem to doubt, and that she had somehow gone up—or down—in the green smoke, carried away by the terrible beings who had appeared upon it, they no doubt believed.

She was behind the shield, that rested against the wall in one corner of the cellar, and she was unconscious; they could neither see nor hear her, and, therefore, they believed that she had been literally carried away before their very eyes.

They, therefore, offered no resistance whatever against the detective and his men, but permitted themselves calmly to be shackled and handcuffed like so many children.

Through all these scenes it appeared as if the Countess of Croydon had remained a passive spectator, seeing everything, understanding nothing, and without even sufficient intelligence left to her to be terrified.

Nick Carter went to her as soon as he could do so, and found her with her eyes wide open, lying upon an improvised couch of boards that had been provided for her; and when he addressed her she gazed up at him with vacant, staring eyes, and an imbecile smile upon her beautiful face that was at once pathetic and terrible.

Then he turned away and crossed the room to the corner where he had placed the shield.

A moment sufficed to liberate Irma Plavatski from the straps which held her limp form against the boards, and the detective, having seated her in a chair and applied restoratives which he carried with him, she presently sighed and opened her eyes to the full realization of her predicament.

At first she did not speak, but let her eyes travel hither and yon about the cellar room, taking in and considering every detail they encountered, and Nick, watching her narrowly, realized that, although she was captured, she was by no means tamed.

Presently, having satisfied herself that there was left no chance of escape, and having decided to accept the inevitable without complaint, she turned her eyes again toward Nick.

"So you are Nick Carter?" she said coldly.

"That, Madam Dazaar, unfortunately for you, is my name."

"And you outwitted me this time, didn't you?"

"So it would seem."

"But why do you call me Madam Dazaar?"

"Chiefly because the name seems to fit you."

"Suppose I should deny that I am Dazaar?"

"It would make no difference in your fate, madam."

"My fate? Bah! What have you, a puny mortal like you, to do with fate?"

"Much, I think, with yours."

"If it pleases you to think so, Mr. Carter, why, think it, by all means; but, nevertheless, my fate, as well as your own, is not in mortal hands."

"It would seem that your present predicament would contradict that statement, madam."

"My present predicament is only temporary, as you will discover."

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"You played the part of Thomas Chelsea superbly, my gay detective," she said, laughing.

"If it deceived you, it must have been well done," replied Nick.

"What have you done with him?" she asked.

"Nothing."

"But you must have done something with him. Really, sir, I can hardly believe yet that you are not he, the make-up is so perfect."

"He is at my house awaiting my return," said Nick.

"Do you mean to insinuate that he betrayed me?"

"I insinuate nothing, madam."

She laughed again.

"He would not if he could," she said, "and he could not if he would, so there you are."

"And yet, he must have known you, and you him."

"Oh, yes, we know each other."

"But does he know that you are Dazaar?" asked Nick.

"Do you know that I am Dazaar?" she retorted.

"I think I do."

"Well, ask him if he does."

"Are you not Dazaar? That is, the only representative of that name?"

"Ask me something easier, my festive friend."

"These men, here, shall be made to confess."

"Indeed! You interest me. How, pray?"

"I will find a way."

"Will you? How interesting! Truly, your opinion of your own prowess is amazing."

"It is based upon experience, madam."

"Doubtless."

"I will find a way to persuade them to a confession."

She laughed scornfully.

"Not all the tortures of the inferno itself could draw a word from any one of them," she said; "not even the embraces of the maiden of steel."

"That reminds me," said Nick, "that when I last heard from you, you wrote me a very unnecessary untruth. I believe you told me that you had Patsy again in your power, especially preserved for the uses of that same metallic maiden."

"Oh, well, I could have had him, and when I wrote the note I meant to take him, for he was at that moment in my power, but I had other plans, and so I decided not to interfere with his liberty just then. May I venture to ask you, Mr. Carter, what you are going to do with me, now that you have got me—or think you have got me?"

"I mean, for one thing, to put you where you cannot escape."

"Ah! And for another thing—what? There must be other things, since you take so much pains to mention only one."

"I can count five murders against you, that I know about. I have no doubt there are many others."

"Haven't you, indeed? How pleasant. Well, there are many others. Really, I should dislike very much to be compelled to count them."

"You admit them, then?"

"Certainly. Why not? Murder, as you call it—but permit me to suggest that it is a very inelegant word—is my avocation; shall I say, my delight? And, above all things, I should enjoy an opportunity to count you among my victims; that is, if I could have time and opportunity to select for you the death that would please me most to look upon."

"What an infinitely pleasant individual you are," said Nick, in deep disgust.

"Thank you," she replied. "I suppose I ought to blush, don't you think so?"

"And yet," continued Nick, ignoring the question the woman had put to him, "you are very beautiful. How can a woman like you descend to such depths of infamy?"

"Oh, easily. You just sit on the edge of things and slide down. I remember that I once told you that I was a sorceress, Mr. Carter."

"I believe you did."

"Very well; I am also something of a prophet."

"That, among other things, I suppose."

"Exactly; that, among other things—many other things. Just now I prefer to pose as a prophetess. I am in the mood to give you the benefit of my prophetic vision."

"Well, you have got about ten minutes more, while we wait for the arrival of the two patrol wagons that I have sent for."

"Then, if you will promise not to interrupt me, I will prophesy for you."

"Go ahead. Perhaps it will serve to kill time while we wait."

"Then listen: I see myself taken to prison and placed under a guard from which there is supposed to be no hope of escape."

"I see the guard who watches over me, watched in its turn by another guard, and so on until there are three or four guards who watch each other, to prevent my exercising any of my strange powers."

"I see an interval of time elapsing during which you as well as those watchers come to the conclusion that I will never be able to escape and that I will die in the electric chair."

"I see the time for my trial approaching, so that it draws quite near."

"Do you follow me, Mr. Carter?"

"Perfectly."

"After that there is a blank. A period of nothing, as it were, and then I see myself again outside the prison walls, free, unpursued, enjoying perfect liberty. Do you still follow me?"

"I do."

"Next I see you. You are seated in your chair in your own home. Then the scene changes, and you are out upon the street, called away from your fireside by a sudden and an unexpected summons. You are absent an hour, and when you return it is to find your house in chaos. Furniture is overturned, there are two dead bodies on the floor in different rooms, your assistants and servants are nowhere to be found, and, above all, Patsy Garvan's wife, Adelina—his wife, Mr. Carter, is missing. I see you shudder, Mr. Carter. That scene touches you, does it not?"

Nick was silent.

"There is one more scene in my vision, sir," she continued, "and it is this: I see you turn away in despair, made frantic by Patsy Garvan's loss, and your own, for I know you love the girl as a daughter, and, as you turn, you are confronted by a form that stands in the doorway. That form is my own, Mr. Carter, and you leap forward to seize upon me, but even as you do so, it fades away in your grasp. There! That is all."

"I have been threatened with ghosts before now," said Nick, with a smile.

"Oh, that is no ghost story, as you will discover. Consider well the prophecy I have told you, and when the time comes to remind you of it, remember that I warned you. I think I hear your patrol wagons at the door, do I not?"

"Yes. They are here."

"One more word before we go."

She motioned to Ten-Ichi to approach, and when he stood before her, still enveloped in the disguise he had worn throughout the scenes just described, she said coldly to him:

"I think I know you, sir, better than you think I do, and were I to die a thousand deaths this minute, and my flesh be torn from my bones, and my bones burned in fire, it would not save you, for there are others after you who will not fail."

Ten-Ichi gazed steadily into the woman's eyes for the space of almost a minute, and from his manner and the intensity of his look it would seem that he was trying to read her innermost soul.

Irma Plavatski met with a gaze as steady and a manner as intent, the eyes of the Japanese detective.

At last the eyes of the man wavered before those of this strange woman, whose power over those whom she ruled seemed to be so absolute, and he fixed them upon other objects in the room. Then he spoke in that low, even monotone which is so characteristic of his race.

"Madam," he said, "you do not hold forth for me a very pleasant prospect. However, though I realize that your power is great, and that those whom you rule obey you absolutely, even though in so doing it spells for them death, it has been my experience and observation that when the leading spirit of an organization of living beings dies, whether that person be Red Donmigan, leader of a Cherry Hill gang, in New York, or a Caesar conquering empires, his staunchest former followers lose all semblance of organization, disintegrate, and their former organization becomes but a memory."

"My little yellow friend," replied the woman scornfully, "your efforts at philosophizing on a truism are amusing, almost as amusing, in fact, as your ignorance of the organization of which you and the gifted Mr. Carter seem to think I am the head."

"I do not think that your organization will prove to be any different, generally speaking," said Ten-Ichi, "than any other. This we will prove when we get to the bottom of this business. And I venture to say, madam, that we have almost reached that level now."

"Little fool."

And Irma Plavatski laughed.

"Perhaps," said Ten-Ichi.

"No perhaps about it. You are doomed to the death you deserve, you miserable little snake! Your ignorance of my power is only exceeded by your audacity in speaking to me in the way you have. But the day of reckoning will come, and it will be amusing to see your agony."

Then calmly she turned her face again to the detective and added:

"I am ready now. Let us go."

An hour later Irma Plavatski and her followers, captured in the cellar meeting room of the Devil Worshipers, were confined in separate cells in prison, and Nick Carter returned to his home feeling assured that Dazaar was at

last behind prison bars from which there was no possibility of escape.

After seeing to it that his captives were confined in such a way that there would be no chance of their escape, Nick Carter returned to his residence on Madison Avenue.

He lost no time, after entering the house, in going at once to his study, where he had left Thomas Chelsea in a chair, confined by the automatic arms from whose embrace there was no escape.

It had been evident that the captive was one of those fortunate individuals who make the best of an unpleasant situation, once they have made up their minds that there is to be no escape from it. "Dame Fortune's fickle hand has thrown the dice," they reason, "I have lost, but I will put up a bold front and make the best of it." And they then proceed to make themselves as comfortable as is possible upon the bed which that erratic goddess of chance has seen fit to make for them.

The bed in this case had not been a particularly thorny one for Chelsea, but it must be admitted that his quarters were rather cramped, and he heaved a great sigh of relief when the detective liberated him from his confinement.

"Well, well, back again, eh?" said Chelsea. "Hope you enjoyed the party!"

"Yes," answered the detective, "I think that, on the whole, I did. But I must confess," he continued, "that at times the company displayed—er—well, perhaps, a craving for excitement, which was in—er—rather bad taste, I might say."

"Did 'em up, I gather?" Chelsea questioned.

"Yes," said the detective grimly, "we did them up, as you say, and I think I may go further and tell you that we did them up brown, very brown—very brown, indeed—to a turn, in fact! And I might add, also, that they have been put back in the oven—with the door shut—to await the usual fate to things which are done to a turn."

"While I can't congratulate you," said Chelsea, "I must say I admire you!"

"Thanks," said Nick, and then the voice of the detective became grave, and he turned to the man and said:

"Mr. Chelsea, you are a young man who interests me. You are reckless, and you keep bad company, but I foresee that nothing I can say will have any effect upon you. Remember this, however, if you meet with trouble, come back here to Nick Carter, and he will befriend you, for you have succeeded in conferring a lasting favor upon him."

THE END.

Nick Carter is called upon by the United States treasury department to hunt down a gang of smugglers. The story of his efforts, aided by those of Patsy Garvan and Chick Carter, will be found in "At Risk of Life; or, Nick Carter's Government Case," which will appear in the next issue of this weekly, No. 42, out August 16th. The narrative is one that is full of surprises, and it will be sure to hold you with absorbing interest from beginning to end.

TESTING DIAMONDS.

No expert can always tell a genuine diamond at a mere glance, as some people suppose. The method employed for determining the genuineness of diamonds at the Brazilian mines is to rub them with black mastic, which will

adhere if the gem is real. The best of all tests, though, is that of refraction. Unlike all other crystals, the diamond has not a double refracting power, which means that objects looked at through it do not appear as if multiplied by two. If you have a diamond of which you are doubtful, look at a pin through it. If you see two pins, the stone is false.

Behind the Asylum Bars;

Or, Turned Down as a Hopeless Case.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

A MASTER OF MILLIONS.

"Why did Doctor Rigby write this letter in cipher?"

"You recognize the cryptic characters, do you not?"

"I recognize them, yes! They are the characters of a secret code known only to the London surgeon and myself. But that does not answer my question. Why did Doctor Rigby adopt this secret code, in writing what ostensibly is merely a letter of introduction brought by you to me?"

"Possibly the letter in that form was calculated to convey more than appears on the surface."

"Am I to infer so?"

"Shall I tell you what Doctor Rigby said to me when he placed the letter in my hand?"

"If that will enlighten me, yes."

"He said," replied the other, "if Doctor Kennedy receives the letter written in our confidential code, instead of the ordinary script, it will at once assure him that you, Mr. Maxwell, are not only a client of mine, but a man whom he also may thoroughly trust, whatever your mission or design. Those, Doctor Kennedy, were Doctor Rigby's precise words, uttered when he handed me that letter of introduction."

Doctor Felix Kennedy eyed his visitor more sharply.

The light in the doctor's private office, for the time was evening, was shed full upon the caller. Though he looked older, he was a man still under thirty. His figure was large and muscular, but without corpulence. His complexion was light, his features regular, and he wore a brown beard, parted in the middle.

He would have been an attractive man had it not been for a coldness of expression and the subtle intensity habitual to his searching gray eyes. His look appeared to be that of a man who might be crafty and cruel, even, should occasion require.

Doctor Felix Kennedy was an opposite type of man. He was short, dark, and compact, as powerful as a bull, and his smoothly shaven face indicated a superior intellect and a will as inflexible as iron. His hair was cut close to his large, round head, and was quite gray; yet Doctor Kennedy was under fifty. He looked like a man whom it would not be wise to oppose; his square jaw was like that of a bulldog.

The two men sat confronting each other at the same side of a center table. The office was well furnished, and a fire glowed in the grate. The office door was closed and latched.

The world outside was in darkness. Only a few stars were discernible between the clouds coursing across the autumn heavens. A strong October wind was whirling the dying leaves from the branches of the neighboring trees, and whistling and moaning most dismally about the eaves and corners of Kennedy's great private sanitarium and asylum for the insane, the lofty stone walls of which, with its three dark wings and its hideous barred windows, were more dark and dismal than the night itself.

Here and there the face of some unfortunate within was pressed against the windowpane of his lonely room, to peer out through the bars confining him, and stare with vacant eyes at the gloom of the sky, or to make grotesque imagery of the gloomier trees, with their swaying and sighing.

More remote were the suburban fields and meadows, with the lanterns of the long driveway to the asylum alone relieving the night darkness; while several miles distant, less elevated even than the inland hills on which Kennedy's institution stood grim and isolated, were the lights of Boston, with its illumined dome of gold upon the state-house rising over all.

Doctor Kennedy's office was in the left wing of the extensive stone building. There was no danger of an intrusion. It would have been all an employee's life was worth to have opened the closed door of that office without first ringing a bell from a corridor twenty feet away. For Doctor Kennedy ruled with an iron rod every department of his institution, and no powder magazine was ever governed by a more rigid and exacting master.

His searching scrutiny of Maxwell's cold gray eyes culminated with the question:

"Has Doctor Rigby, of London, long been a personal friend of yours?"

"For many years," replied Maxwell, with a curious mingling of firmness and complacency.

Had there been a third party present, a witness to this interview, it would have been very evident to him that these two men were sounding one another with the extreme caution of total strangers; and that some evil design, if not a crime of the most desperate character, was mutually understood to be the object of this meeting.

"Then Doctor Rigby knows you very well, Mr. Maxwell," rejoined the autocrat of the asylum.

"He certainly does, sir."

"And how do you regard him?"

"As a man whom one may safely trust with a hazardous secret."

"Did he recommend you for a like quality?"

"Had he not done so, Doctor Kennedy, I should have had no occasion to call upon you."

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Maxwell, this letter so informs me," Doctor Kennedy now replied. "Doctor Rigby and myself were very intimately associated when I lived in England years ago. I presume I invite no danger in now admitting to you that Doctor Rigby and I were at that time mutually interested in occasional transactions which would have been very censoriously regarded had the truth ever become public, and which might have cost both of us our liberty, if not life."

It was said with a smile, the very sinister character of which was sufficient to disclose the decidedly vicious nature of the speaker.

Tracy Maxwell bowed, and the expression of evil satisfaction which rose over his composed features showed that

he thoroughly appreciated all that the physician's words had implied.

"So I have understood, Doctor Kennedy," he rejoined. "It was for that very reason that I knew I could wisely approach you at this time."

"When did you arrive in America, Mr. Maxwell?"

"Rather more than a month ago."

"And in Boston?"

"Less than a week ago."

"Upon business?"

"Very important business, sir!" said Maxwell deeply.

"And upon what matter do you wish to consult me, sir?"

"Rather than to consult you, I have called to make a proposition which Doctor Rigby gave me to understand that you would seriously consider."

"I shall be pleased at least to hear it," said Doctor Kennedy, smiling again. "I'll add that you may feel free to speak very plainly."

"Thank you," said Maxwell dryly. "I presume there is no danger of an eavesdropper?"

Doctor Kennedy's smile became a low, hard laugh; a laugh which would have grated with frightful repulsiveness on the nerve of any honest and sensitive man.

"No, no danger of that, Mr. Maxwell," he returned significantly. "I am the head and front of this institution, sir, and my employees know me too well to take any liberty to which I would offer an objection."

"Probably you're already aware that they are men and women who may be trusted?" observed Maxwell, half inquiringly.

Doctor Kennedy's sinister eyes took on an expression from which some men would have recoiled.

"My employees obey my commands without question, never doubt that!" he replied, with grim austerity. "They are well paid, sir, and I invariably know my man before I employ him. Mr. Maxwell, if you were never to leave this institution; if, indeed, these walls were now to become the tomb in which, living or dead, you were eternally to repose, I would defy the outside world to discover where you were, or what had become of you."

"I am glad to hear that!" said Maxwell oddly, with a smile.

"Now, sir, you surely can feel that you may speak plainly?"

Maxwell drew his chair a little closer to that of the physician.

"I do feel so," he replied. "In fact, I have felt so from the first, Doctor Kennedy, yet the delicate nature of my proposition has led me to broach it with discretion."

"Cast discretion to the winds, sir!" exclaimed Doctor Kennedy curtly. "Doctor Rigby, if you know him for what he is, is surely a sufficient voucher between us. Speak out, sir!"

Tracy Maxwell demurred no longer.

"Doctor Kennedy," he said, with sinister earnestness, "I am the younger son of the late Richard Maxwell, of Staffordshire, England. My father died three months ago, leaving to his heirs an estate worth two hundred thousand pounds sterling, from which accrues an annual income of ten thousand pounds."

"A matter of a million in American money," observed

Doctor Kennedy, smiling. "That is a very handsome principal, sir."

"Too handsome a property to lose, if it can be by any means secured."

"I should think so! What are the particulars, Mr. Maxwell?"

"These," said Maxwell earnestly: "My father was twice married, and died a widower. He had only two children, both boys, and one by each wife. I am the issue of the second marriage, and hence the younger son."

"And your brother?"

"My half brother, sir?"

"I stand corrected; your half brother?"

"His name is Horace Maxwell. He is nearly ten years my senior, and is now about thirty-six years of age. Until a few days ago I had not seen him since he was twenty; and he did not recognize in me the boy of ten, whom he saw nearly eighteen years ago for the last time."

"Am I to understand that Horace Maxwell is in this country?"

"He is in Boston, sir."

"Go on, Mr. Maxwell," said the physician, with an expressive smile. "You interest me!"

"Before he was twenty," continued Tracy Maxwell, "my half brother committed a misdemeanor in Oxford, where he was receiving his education, and seriously incurred my father's displeasure."

"Go on, Mr. Maxwell."

"The censure of my father was so severe, sir, that Horace, who was a high-strung and impulsive youth, took bitter exceptions to it. His resentment was so great, and the breach between him and his father so serious, that Horace Maxwell suddenly left England for parts unknown, and was not heard from afterward."

"Oh, I see!"

"My father relented during his last illness," continued Maxwell, frowning slightly, "and, instead of bequeathing to me his entire estate, he made a will in my half brother's favor, with the provision that Horace Maxwell must be located within two years, and found to be a man whose character and vocation should, in the judgment of my father's solicitor, render him worthy of becoming his heir. In that case, Doctor Kennedy, my half brother will receive the bulk of the estate, and I shall be cut off with a paltry twenty thousand pounds."

"Shocking!" said Doctor Kennedy, raising his hands in a deprecatory gesture. "That would be an injustice not calmly to be suffered by any man with a spirit of his own. What have you done about this since your father's death?"

Maxwell shrugged his broad shoulders, and smiled faintly.

"I've since been making strenuous efforts to head off what you so aptly termed an injustice," he replied. "By ostensibly sanctioning the will of my father, I've blinded our solicitor to my true sentiments. At his suggestion I came to America to locate my half brother, if possible, and inform him of the situation."

"And you have discovered Horace Maxwell?"

"Precisely."

"Does he know that your father has died?"

"He does not."

"And he has not recognized you?"

"I am absolutely certain that he has not."

"Then, if Horace Maxwell was to be—well," and Doctor

Kennedy put it quite delicately for him; "if Horace Maxwell was to be effectually removed from the world, or, at least, to that extent which would prevent him from communicating with the world, you would at the end of two years inherit the entire estate of your deceased parents? Am I right?"

"Perfectly so!" said Maxwell significantly.

"I now can imagine of what your proposition will consist!" said Doctor Kennedy, cheerfully rubbing his hands.

"It would not seem to require a very vivid imagination," rejoined Maxwell, with a dry laugh.

"No, not at all."

"And what answer may I feel that I am likely to receive from you, sir?"

Doctor Kennedy wheeled his chair about, and, resting his palms on his knees, looked his visitor steadfastly in the face.

"Suppose, Mr. Maxwell, that I were to coöperate with you in the removal of your half brother," he slowly demanded; "what would there be in it for me?"

"A sum equal to my inheritance, if he is removed," was the immediate reply.

"Twenty thousand pounds?"

"Twenty thousand pounds, sir!"

Doctor Kennedy smiled agreeably.

"That is a sufficient incentive, providing its payment can be insured," he said pointedly.

"I will provide for that, sir."

"A few questions, then, if you please."

"Ask them."

"Where is Horace Maxwell now located?"

"In Boston, under the name of John Wildman."

"The artist?"

"None other," replied Maxwell gravely. "It was through one of his paintings which I chanced to see in New York, and which depicted a bit of rural scenery near the home of our boyhood, that I unexpectedly located him."

"That was curious, and would seem to indicate that things are working in your favor, Mr. Maxwell," observed the physician. "You have no doubt of his identity?"

"Absolutely none! I recognized him instantly."

"Do you think you can by any means lure him to this asylum without making him suspicious of something wrong?"

"Easily, Doctor Kennedy."

"And without his having imparted to any person the fact that he was to come here?"

"He himself will not know it until he arrives here. I easily can accomplish that."

"You have been cultivating his acquaintance, then?"

"I have called on him in a business way only, or so at least he imagined," Maxwell gravely replied. "I shall give him to understand that I wish to engage him to paint a scene in this locality, and I can easily get him to come out here with me, ostensibly for the purpose of viewing it."

"That's not bad!" nodded Doctor Kennedy approvingly.

"You certainly have a good head for designing. By what name does he know you?"

"By the name of McKenzie."

"He is not married, is he?"

"He is a bachelor, and his studio is in his suite of chambers."

"No wife or family to stir up a mess! No kindred in this country! It would seem that the authorities would speedily let the mystery drop, should this man abruptly disappear," said Doctor Kennedy, glibly weighing the situation. "What more have you to say to me, Mr. Maxwell?"

"Merely this, Doctor Kennedy," returned Maxwell, with a more crafty and cruel look than he had yet worn. "His confinement alone will not serve my purpose. I could not rest in ease, knowing that he some day might effect his escape, and, perhaps, confront me with my crime. With him absolutely removed from my path, I may enjoy wealth, social position, and political distinction; only such incentives as these could lead me even to consider such an appalling outrage."

"Faugh!"

"I mean what I say," cried Maxwell, with forcible austerity. "If Horace Maxwell enters this place with me, confinement alone will not suffice! I shall require more of you than that!"

"There is but one thing more," said Doctor Kennedy, "and that is—death!"

"And that is what I shall require!" declared Maxwell, with his cheeks grown quite pale.

But Doctor Felix Kennedy's inflexible countenance continued as composed and hard as a face of stone.

"Don't regard it so seriously!" he said, with dry bluntness. "Birth and death are merely incidents. Sometimes it is necessary to prevent the one, sometimes it is equally wise to effect the other. Sit nearer the fire, and smoke a Henry Clay. Or, perhaps, you would prefer a stimulant instead. There is some brandy in the wall cabinet. Help yourself, Mr. Maxwell. I am quite certain now that we shall have no difficulty in arranging the details of this trifling little episode!"

Maxwell stared down at the cold, hard face of the speaker, and demanded huskily:

"Will you consent to do it, then?"

"For the price mentioned!" said Doctor Kennedy pointedly.

"And my half brother?"

"Do your part, as I shall direct," grimly returned the physician, "and within a month, sir, you will have no half brother!"

CHAPTER II.

SHERIDAN KEENE'S YOUNG CALLER.

"There's a lady in the parlor, Mr. Keene, who appears very anxious indeed that you will see her."

Sheridan Keene regarded his landlady with some surprise, when she appeared at his chamber door and made the above announcement. The clever detective was not accustomed to receiving lady visitors at his boarding house, and, although he immediately surmised the probable nature of her mission, he considered the circumstance quite peculiar.

It occurred one evening about eight o'clock, and ten days subsequent to the infamous interview between Doctor Kennedy and Tracy Maxwell, the gentleman from England.

"Did the lady give you her name?" inquired Sheridan Keene, laying aside an enormous scrapbook in which he had been pasting the data and details of the great Mycroft murder mystery, which he had recently solved, to the

wonderment and admiration of a dazed and mystified public. "Or do you know the lady by sight?" he added.

"I did not see her face, for she was veiled," was the reply; "and she gave me no card. She said, however, that I might mention the name of Lawyer Bromley."

"Frank Bromley!" exclaimed Keene, immediately rising. "Possibly she is a friend of his. Tell her I will presently join her in the parlor, if you please."

"Certainly, sir."

Keene waited only to replace his book in its shelf, and to change his smoking jacket for a more conventional garment; and a few minutes later he entered the parlor on the floor below, closing the door behind him.

His visitor, who was seated in a chair near the piano, immediately arose and threw back her veil.

Keene caught his breath for an instant, so great was his surprise.

For the face that met his gaze was like a vision of loveliness. It was that of a young lady, of not more than twenty years, with features as fair as a rose leaf, and an expression of indescribable beauty and pathetic earnestness. Her eyes were of the softest blue, and the fleece of her hair under her dark veil was like a halo to her lovely countenance.

She was neatly dressed in black, with a dark, fashionably made jacket, and the dignity and grace with which she rose to meet him at once showed her to be a person of culture and refinement.

"Are you Mr. Sheridan Keene, the detective, sir?" she inquired, in a soft, musical voice.

"Yes, madam," bowed Keene, smiling courteously. "Please resume your seat."

"My name is Mary Randall, sir—Miss Randall," she replied, acknowledging his greeting. "I was advised to consult you by Lawyer Bromley, who is a personal friend."

"I inferred the latter, Miss Randall, when my landlady stated that you had mentioned Mr. Bromley's name," replied Keene, taking a seat near her. "About what do you wish to consult me?"

"I require the services of a detective, sir," said Miss Randall half timidly.

"I do not often undertake any work aside from my duties as a member of the regular force," replied Keene, with grave kindness. "Very possibly I can give you some advice, however, if you care to state the nature of your case? And I, perhaps, can recommend some capable detective to whom you can apply."

But Mary Randall shook her head, and Keene saw the rays of light from overhead reflected from a glistening moisture quickly risen in the girl's blue eyes.

"That will not answer, sir," she replied, with tremulous earnestness. "Mr. Bromley told me to see you, and to state my trouble, and that you certainly would help me. He told me to say that to you from him, sir; and that I must have your assistance at any cost."

"Evidently Mr. Bromley has an exalted idea of my ability as a detective," said Keene, smiling oddly. "I, at least, will hear your story, Miss Randall. What is the nature of your trouble?"

"The gentleman to whom I am engaged to be married is mysteriously missing."

Under ordinary circumstances the detective would have felt inclined to laugh, for such an occurrence was only too frequent. But recalling the lawyer's interest in the case,

and observing the rare beauty and gentleness of the girl opposite, which surely were sufficient to have retained the affection of almost any man, Keene decided that the disappearance might be more than a mere lover's episode.

"Who is the gentleman, Miss Randall?" he asked gravely.

"His name is John Wildman."

"What is his vocation?"

"He is an artist, and has rooms and a studio near Copley Square."

"How long has he been missing?"

"For five days, sir."

"With whom does he live?"

"He lives alone, sir, occupying a suite of apartments, one room of which he uses for a studio."

Keene regarded her rather doubtfully for a moment.

"Are you quite sure, Miss Randall, that you have reasonable grounds for your evident anxiety?" he asked gravely.

"Indeed, sir, I have!" exclaimed Miss Randall, with tears in her eyes. "I have known Mr. Wildman for three years, sir, and he is a man of regular habits and scrupulous character."

"Still, he may have been abruptly called away on business for a brief time," suggested the detective.

"Impossible, sir! He certainly would have informed me before leaving, or subsequently have sent me word. We both are strangers to you, Mr. Keene, hence you can have no appreciation of our relations. Mr. Wildman and I have been engaged for more than a year. We were to have been quietly married day before yesterday. Like him, I am alone in the world, and have had to work for my living. Knowing Mr. Wildman as I do, I am convinced that only an accident or some kind of foul play can have occasioned his mysterious disappearance at a time we both have anticipated so longingly."

"Possibly something has befallen him."

"Oh, Mr. Keene, I beg of you to be influenced by my belief, rather than by the judgment born of your experience; and I implore you not to turn me away without investigating this affair, to me so terrible."

Tears were rolling down the girl's fair cheeks, and her tremulous voice and suppressed sobs appealed to Keene with an irresistible eloquence.

"Calm yourself, Miss Randall," he said kindly. "When did you last see Mr. Wildman?"

"Last Friday noon, sir. I am employed in the public library, which is but a short walk from Mr. Wildman's studio, and I called there during my noon hour, as I frequently have done."

"And to-day is Wednesday," observed Keene thoughtfully. "Did you then have any understanding with Mr. Wildman as to when you would next see him?"

"Indeed, yes! He was to call on me that evening."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"No, sir; nor heard from him," was the tearful rejoinder. "I felt a little anxious next morning, lest he might have been ill, and I went to his rooms. For nearly a year, sir, I have had a key to his apartments, that I might enter to await his return at times when I found him away."

"Did you enter his rooms Saturday morning?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"What did you find?"

"I found things precisely as I had observed them the previous noon. His brushes and palette lay where he had

left them. His sleeping room had not been occupied during the night, and his smoking jacket lay upon the bed. The fire in the grate had expired, and the rooms were cold.

"Did you search for any missive which he might have left for you?"

"High and low, sir; but there was none."

"Did you observe anything which might have suggested at what hour he left his rooms?"

"No, sir," and Mary Randall tearfully shook her head.

"A dim light had been left burning in his library—"

"Ah," interposed Keene quickly; "that indicates that he expected to return after dark, or that it possibly was evening when he left."

"I never thought of that, sir."

"It is a part of our business, that of making deductions from trifling things," replied Keene kindly. "I will ask you a few more questions, if you please."

Mary Randall's face brightened quickly. She evidently had been told that, if Sheridan Keene would undertake to solve the mystery of John Wildman's disappearance, the truth would very soon be unveiled; and the interest now displayed by the detective seemed to encourage her.

And Keene's wonderful detective art led him instinctively to a series of questions and natural deductions which could have emanated only from an expert in his chosen profession.

"You say you have been acquainted with Mr. Wildman for three years, Miss Randall?"

"Yes, sir; rather more than that."

"Is he a man of means?"

"He has only what he has derived from his profession, sir. He is not wealthy."

"I think I have heard him mentioned as a successful artist, have I not?"

"Very likely, sir. He, for the past three years, has had a ready market for his paintings."

"Is he what is commonly termed a society man?"

"Not at all, sir. He has very few intimate friends, and is naturally very reserved."

"Reserved people are frequently taciturn and moody," said Keene suggestively. "How about Mr. Wildman?"

"Quite the contrary, sir," said Miss Randall, with a shake of her head. "He is invariably genial and cheerful, yet he has never cared for a large circle of friends."

"Have you ever heard him speak of having any enemies?"

"Never, sir."

"Who were his antecedents?"

"I cannot tell you, Mr. Keene," Miss Randall said sadly.

"Do you mean that he was to be married to you, Miss Randall, without having told you of his family?"

"I think he perhaps would have done so before he married me," she replied. "He said only a week ago that he had a little secret to confide to me, relating to his early life. But the disclosure of it was then deferred, and I now cannot say what it would have been."

"Did he use the word secret?" inquired Keene, more gravely.

"That was the very word he used, sir."

"You do not know, then, where he was born, or where he lived in early life?"

"No, sir, I do not," replied Miss Randall regretfully.

Then she abruptly added, though with some uncertainty:

"But I at times have thought I noticed in his speech

certain features which led me to think he was an Englishman, or that he had lived in England."

"Did you make any remark to him to that effect?"

"Once, sir."

"How did he receive it?"

"He colored slightly, I thought; yet he merely laughed at my observation, and made no reply."

"As a matter of fact, Miss Randall, you know very little about Mr. Wildman, save as a friend?" said Keene gently.

"That is true, sir," she replied, with a sob. "But I know, as only one can know whose heart has abiding faith in the love he had bestowed upon her, that some terrible misfortune has befallen John Wildman. Any who know him, sir, will tell you he is not a man who voluntarily would have acted thus."

There was in the case something which now began to appeal to Sheridan Keene. He turned his chair a little nearer that of his fair visitor, and said kindly:

"Do not distress yourself too deeply, Miss Randall. I think I'll investigate the case for you."

"Oh, sir, how am I to thank you?"

"Thank me after I have accomplished something," replied Keene, smiling. "Now, carefully answer my questions: You say you last saw Mr. Wildman on Friday noon? Do you know upon what work he was engaged at that time?"

"I think upon one of his paintings, sir."

"Did he mention having any appointment for that evening?"

"He did not."

"Do you know if he lately has had business relations with any stranger?"

"Yes, sir, he has," the girl said quickly. "He told me he expected to paint a picture for a new customer."

"Did he mention the person's name?"

"Oh, yes; the name was McKenzie."

"You do not know the full name?"

"I do not," said Miss Randall, shaking her head. "But since Mr. Wildman mysteriously disappeared, Mr. McKenzie has called once at the library to see me, to ask if I could inform him when Mr. Wildman would return."

Keene's grave face changed slightly, and his eyes lighted perceptibly.

"How did Mr. McKenzie know of your relations with Mr. Wildman?" he inquired gravely.

"I do not know, sir."

"Had he ever seen you in the studio of the artist?"

"Possibly, sir; or, perhaps, Mr. Wildman told him about me."

"It is not probable, Miss Randall, that a man of natural reserve would have told a stranger anything about you, or about his relations with you," said Keene quickly. "Do you know where this McKenzie may be found?"

"No, sir; I do not."

"Will you describe the man, please?"

Mary Randall at once complied, giving Keene quite a precise description of the general appearance of Mr. Tracy Maxwell; and the detective, when she had concluded, closed the book in which he had casually noted a few of her disclosures.

"Do you still retain the key of Mr. Wildman's rooms?" he then asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Can you conveniently meet me there at ten o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"Indeed, sir, yes!" exclaimed Miss Randall eagerly.

"Do so, then," said Keene, with grave decisiveness. "I will be there at precisely ten."

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE ENGINEER'S STORY.

By CHESTER F. STARBUCK.

"I run that old 'kittle' many a day, boys," said old Jake Gates, "an' always had good luck with her 'cept once. She was a bird—was the *Bridget Muldoon*—an' I don't know when I felt as bad as I did when they took away her name from her, an' give her a number instead. Seemed as if King Death had separated me from my heart's dearest idol. This new-fangled notion of givin' numbers to engines I don't like. We used to have the *Hero*, the *Hercules*, the *June*, the *Vesta*, an' many others; but there wasn't one of 'em could hold a candle to the pride of my heart, my *Bridget Muldoon*.

"Those of you who never saw her when she carried her name in beautiful letters on her jacket, instead of those big, ugly, starin' figgers, an' know nothin' of why she was given such a plebeian name, may think she was in those days a common drudge, such as a helper, or a yard engine, an' never think of her occupyin' the choice room in the engine house, an' bein' tended by many servants, an' flyin' over the road like a thing of life, with palace cars behind her.

"Yes, there's a story connected with her havin' that name, an' I never think of it without thankin' Heaven for *Bridget Muldoon*, an' blessin' the land that gave her birth, an' the ship that carried her safely to our shores.

"Ye see, after I had been runnin' a long time, a new engine came out, an' they give her to me, an' give me the privilege of namin' her. Now, Indianlike, I determined to run her a few trips on 'the warpath' afore I gave her a name; an' I also determined to do the thing up in style, an' crack a bottle of wine over her, an' have a little ceremony like they do when they launch a vessel an' give it a name.

"On the trip out I was so occupied with watchin' her, learnin' her points, an' admirin' the way she would take the bit in her teeth an' shake the dust out of the coaches when I gave her the rein, that I never thought of a name; but on the way back I kept connin' over all the pretty names I ever heard of. Me an' the fireman held many a confab, an' talked over Cleopatra, Victoria, Columbia, an' other 'phonious female names; for, ye know, I always was partial to the ladies—bless their tender hearts!—an' was bound to give my pet somethin' pretty in honor of 'em, as she was such a beauty, an' deservin' of it.

"We had run over two-thirds of the road, an', not havin' come to a decision, I had 'bout made up my mind to leave it all to my dear wife when I got home. We was delayed forty minutes at Brepen by a freight engine bein' off the track, and when I pulled out from there I dropped her down in the corner, an', givin' her the rein, determined to make up as much time as possible.

"About five miles out of Walkerton, ye know, there is a 'reverse curve,' the track runnin' around the high bluff, which towers on one side full five hundred feet, an' on

the other 'tis a steep an' rocky decline, a hundred feet, to the bed of Dead-man's Run. Ye know what a fearful place it is for a wreck, especially since that freight went over an' killed poor Taylor an' Fent. I 'cased off' a little. When I struck the straight track a few hundred yards from the curve, but was runnin' thirty miles an hour at least, when around the curve came a woman runnin' and swingin' her apron like mad.

"There's no jumpin' off at that place, my boys, an', in fact, I never thought of it. I shut off, called brakes—we had no air brakes then—'pulled her over,' gave her steam an' sand, an', with quiverin' nerves an' aching heart, thought of the poor passengers behind me, so soon to be hurled into eternity, an' of my dear wife an' little ones at home. The boys were prompt with the brakes, we had a good rail under us, an' my as yet nameless engine did her duty nobly. We ran around the point an' stopped at the reverse of the curve, to see a huge rock lyin' on the track but a few rods ahead of us, to strike which would have been certain death to many, if not all, of us, as the shock must have thrown the entire train sheer over the precipice.

"Some of us went back to look for the woman who had saved us, an' found her lyin' by the side of the track, insensible from fright an' exertion. She was tenderly put aboard the train, an' we backed up to Walkerton.

"We learned from her that she had left her little cabin back in the hills to see the trains pass, which was an era in her dreary life, an' arrived at the track 'bout the time we was due. Walkin' slowly along, an' listenin' for the trains, she discovered the rock. Not knowin' which way to look for the first train, she stood there in the cold until she heard us, an' then rushed around the curve to stop us. I shudder yet to think what would have happened if that freight bein' off the track hadn't made us late. Don't talk to me 'bout Providence not directin' things. That rock may have slipped the notice of Providence, an' slipped down on the track, an' then to save us, an' give my engine a name to boot, the freight was run off the track.

"But to return to the woman who saved us. After she had revived, I said:

"'Madame, what's your name?'

"'Bridget Muldoon, sir,' said she.

"'Askin' her indulgence for a moment, I stepped into the hotel an' procured a bottle of wine. I then helped her up on my engine, an', tellin' the passengers what I intended doin', gave her the wine to break over the whistle dome, which she did, an' at the same instant the crowd broke into a 'three times three an' a tiger' for *Bridget Muldoon* an' her namesake.

"Before we proceeded on our way, a purse of five hundred dollars was made up for our little Irish lady, an' the company did the handsome thing by her afterward: an' many's the time did I salute her with the whistle as I flew past the place where she stood watchin' for her namesake to go by. I was always proud of my engine, an' proud of her name, an', as I said, have never ceased thankin' Heaven for *Bridget Muldoon*."

"But how about the tumble she gave you, Jake, when poor Williams and so many were killed?"

"Well, that was the only time in many years runnin' of the *Bridget* that I ever had bad luck; an' I kinder hate to speak of it, it came about so singular. Still, I will tell

ye of it if ye want to hear it. I will say in the beginnin' that I am not superstitious, an' was never fooled afore or since by what is called 'optical 'lusions.' I never imagined I saw things that had no substance, like some are always doin'. But there are strange things in this world, an' my disbelief in the supernatural has always been a little shaky since what I am 'bout to tell ye of occurred.

"I left C— one lovely night on the night express, an hour late, an', as the connection on the other end had failed to come, I had a light train, an' determined to make up lost time an' go in 'on the dot'."

"My engine did nobly, an' I was givin' the passengers a lively deal, when just as we shot over the top of Woodstock grade I saw two horses a-runnin' up the track; one dark-colored an' t'other white, the white ahead. I would not mind a couple of bullocks, but horses is a different thing. They're almost sure, to trip up an engine. So I shut off, an' opened my cylinder cocks, the fireman all the time lookin' ahead, an' at me, wonderin' what was up. My eyes wasn't off them horses a minute, but when I glanced ahead again they had disappeared.

"I knew they hadn't had time to get around the curve, a mile ahead, an' when I pulled ahead Bill an' me looked to see the fences down somewhere, but all was in good order. Just as we got opposite Brush Lake, I saw 'em again, plain as day; but when I hollered to Bill, he swore he couldn't see 'em, an' said that as I didn't drink, I must have smelled somebody's breath. They were runnin', as afore, the white ahead, an' disappeared in the brush right at the curve. I talked it over with my wife when I got home, an' she laid it all to optical 'lusion.

"My run was out again next afternoon, but I changed off with another engineer, at his request, which threw me on the night express again, leaving at midnight. I went to bed early to get what rest I could, an', although I had eaten a very light supper, fell to dreamin'. I was on the road, runnin' at a high rate of speed, an' when turnin' Brush Lake curve I saw ahead of me two horses, one dark-colored an' t'other white, the white ahead, an' afore I could make a move to check our tremendous speed, we was into 'em. In my agony of excitement I made such a noise that my wife awakened me.

"Fallin' asleep again, I took up the broken threads of my dream. I now thought I was at home in bed, bound hand and foot, an' my wife was standin' at the winder, lookin' out. Directly she said:

"It's comin', Jake, dear."

"What?" said I.

"Why, the funeral. You just keep quiet, an' I will tell you all about it as it passes," answered she.

"In a minute she said:

"Why, Jake, what a singular thing! The first hearse is drawn by two horses—one dark-colored, t'other white. The very kind that caused the accident."

"At t'is instant the dream was rudely broken by the 'caller' poundin' on the door for me to go out, an' in a few minutes I was on my engine ready for duty.

"As we pulled out I told Bill, my fireman, 'bout my dream, an' that it an' the sein' of the horses on our trip out had made me feel kinder blue. But he only laughed, an' told me the fumes of that feller's breath had upset me. Poor Bill! I see his broad, good-humored face yet as he joked me 'bout it.

"At Cabetown we was delayed some little time 'sawin' "

past freights, an' I shook 'em up lively after leavin' there. Before I got to Brush Lake curve I thought of my phantom horses, an' would have shut off goin' round it if I hadn't been afraid of bein' laughed at. Oh, I would to Heaven, now, that I had done so; for, as we turned it, Bill, who was on the inside of the curve, an' saw around it afore I did, hollered:

"Shut off, Jake, for Heaven's sake! There's your horses!"

"Aye, there they were. One dark-colored, t'other white—the white ahead. I had no more'n shut off when we struck the first, an' directly after the other, which knocked the rear drivers off the track, an' knockin' us about so we couldn't make a move to jump off, an' then we come to a small bridge, an' over we went in the ditch.

"When I come to my senses again I was at home in bed, an' so splintered an' bandaged up that I couldn't move. An' now comes the most singular part of it.

"My wife—who, mind you, knew nothing 'bout the latter part of my strange dream on that eventful night—told me all 'bout the result of the accident—"bout my fireman bein' killed, as well as Conductor Williams, the baggage master, an' five passengers, an' eight or nine badly hurt; an' said she:

"Now, Jake, you just keep nice and quiet, an' I'll tell you all about the funeral as it goes by. Poor Wall, an' Williams, an' Staley are to be buried this afternoon, an', as I knew you would hear the band, I had to tell you."

"My dream was all comin' true, an' I knew, as sure as I lived, what kind of horses would be in the first hearse—one dark-colored, t'other white; an' when my wife used almost the exact words of my dream in tellin' me of it, I wasn't much surprised, but almost worried myself into a fever tryin' to figure it out.

"My many bruises, an' broken ribs, an' leg mended fast, an' the doctors rebuilt me 'bout as soon as the company rebuilt my engine, an' Bridget an' me was most as good as new when we once more flashed over the road."

WRESTLING WITH A BEAR.

Billy Parott, originally a blacksmith, then a sailor, had drifted to a Bengal indigo plantation, where he had charge of the machinery. He was a good-natured fellow, as strong as a bull, and a splendid wrestler, having learned every trick of that sport from the many wrestling matches he had engaged in while living in the north of England. One day several of the English planters joined in a bear-shooting excursion, and Billy accompanied them.

On arriving in the jungle they were posted along the edge of a precipitous gully on platforms in the trees, about fifty yards apart, where they waited until the coolies, beating the bush, drove up the game.

After several deer had been shot, there was a long, silent wait, while the coolies were beating another part of the jungle. Billy had left his platform, and was talking to the occupants of another, when some one shouted: "Look out, you beggars, there's a bear!"

A great she bear rushed through the bushes, accompanied by her cub, and grunting savagely. She came close to Billy, but would not have attacked him had not one of the hunters splintered her lower jaw by a shot from his rifle. Then, with a growl, she rose up and rushed for Billy. He started to run, but his foot caught in a vine, and down to the ground he fell. In an instant the bear was upon

him. The brute was powerless to bite, because of her broken jaw; but she got Billy in a close hug, and rolled over and over with him in her arms.

Here Billy's strength and his knowledge of wrestling tricks served him. He twisted his strong, bandy legs round the bear's hind quarters, thus keeping the brute from tearing him with her hind claws. His left elbow he got right under the bear's throat, a favorite wrestling trick, by which he kept the bear's mouth from his face, and with his right fist he dealt the bear in the face and ribs blow after blow, that sounded above even his own mad shouts.

There was no chance for the other hunters to shoot or to stab, as they might have hurt Billy instead of the bear, who was tearing the man's shoulders with his foreclaws. Over and over they rolled, writhing, panting, struggling, and approaching the edge of the precipitous gully.

The sportsmen were alarmed, but powerless. As the wrestlers rolled perilously near the precipice, Billy's friends rushed forward to save him. They were too late; over went bear and man. The hunters looked over the verge, and saw the black, jumbled mass bound from an overhanging ledge, and disappear down the gloomy chasm. Not one of them expected to see Billy alive again.

Moody and silent, they went down the steep descent, accompanied by the coolies, to find poor Billy's body. At last they got to the bottom of the ravine. A sound caused them to pause. From the cavernous bottom of the ravine they heard Billy singing.

"Hurrah!" shouted again and again the delighted hunters, and then rushed down, over rocks and through creepers. They found Billy alive, but torn and bruised, sitting on the mangled carcass of his late enemy. But he was sound in wind and limb, while the bear's ribs had been smashed in as a man crushes an eggshell. She fell first on the jagged rock, and thus saved Billy from being smashed into a mangled heap. One of the party was a doctor, and by the evening, Billy, propped on a camp bed, was again singing his chorus, "Twankle diddle, oh!"

DO ANIMALS BLUSH?

Several of the higher apes share with man the involuntary habit of blushing. The blush of an ape extends over a larger portion of the body than that of a human being. Any sudden shock, or pleasure, or surprise, or a fit of anger, will bring out a vivid blush on the face of an ape. It may be said that all animals which perspire through the skin are more or less capable of blushing, for a flush on the skin is simply the result of a rush of blood, due to relaxation of the muscles controlling the vessels underlying the skin.

EARLY HOURS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

There is a peculiarity which Vienna shares in common with all Austrian towns. It is that the streets at ten o'clock p. m. are quite deserted, owing to a law which exists authorizing the concierge-doorkeeper—to levy a tax of ten kreutzers, called the *spergeld*, on any person when leaving or entering a house after that hour. This *spergeld* obliges you when invited to a late party to pay ten kreutzers on leaving your own apartments, ten more on entering your friend's, the same amount on leaving, and another ten on reentering your own house. This

tax gives rise to some curious fashions. Thus the theater and opera commence early and close at a quarter to ten. If the performance lasts longer, the great bulk of the audience will rise and hasten away. Parties are broken up, and even inveterate whist players interrupt their rubbers, in order to avoid being out after ten and subjecting themselves to the payment of the tax. In Korea there is also a very peculiar custom forbidding any of the male portion of the population from being out after eight o'clock in the evening. When the Korean eight-o'clock curfew sounds, all the men must be indoors while the women are free to roam about until one a. m.

WHY SPIDERS FIGHT.

When two or more spiders fight there is usually a good reason for the furious attack and vigorous defense that always follows.

It is not generally known that after a certain time has elapsed spiders become incapable of spinning a web from lack of sufficient material. The glutinous substance from which the spider spins its slender web is limited; therefore, spiders cannot keep on constructing new snares for their prey when the old webs are destroyed.

Very often when the web material is exhausted they are able to avail themselves of the web-producing powers of their younger or more fortunate neighbors, and this they do without any scruple whatever.

As soon as a spider's web-constructing material has become exhausted and its last web destroyed, it usually sets out in search of another home, and unless it should find one that is unoccupied a battle usually ensues, which ends only with the retreat or death of the invader or defender.

Such a struggle is intensely interesting, and will reveal some wonderful tactics and skill in spider warfare. The invader usually comes off victorious, although in some cases the defender puts up such a stiff fight it is able to hold its own in spite of the attack of the intruder which is in desperate straits.

One strange fact is, the web material will increase after so long a period, and the spider will spin a net in which to snare its many varieties of prey in the form of different kinds of insects.

Spiders that are very successful in capturing food are often set upon by other spiders which have for some reason not been as successful as their neighbor.

YOUR WONDERFUL BODY.

The human body takes in an average of five and a half pounds of food and drink each day, which amounts to one ton of solid and liquid nourishment annually, so that in seventy years a man eats and drinks 1,000 times his own weight.

Every time we breathe 100 muscles are employed, 40 per cent of the muscles of the body being active in wonderful coöperation in this single act.

Another marvel of the human body is the self-regulation process by which nature keeps the temperature in health in 98 degrees. Whether in India, with the temperature at 130 degrees, or in the arctic regions, where the records show 120 degrees below the freezing point, the temperature of the body remains the same, practically steady at 98 degrees, despite the extremes to which it is subjected.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Sixty Years in Cab of Engine is His Record.

Retired on a full salary for life, after a service at the throttle for sixty years, R. S. Sigman is preparing to return to his farm on the banks of the Cape Fear River, near Asheville, N. C., to spend the rest of his days with his family without day dreams or nightmares of possible wrecks.

Engineer Sigman was recently retired by the Southern Railway, and, so far as it is known, he is the oldest handler of the throttle in the service of the company to be retired for life.

Sigman went into the railroad service when coal burners, of course, were unknown, and wood-fuel engines were in use throughout the country where railroads had penetrated. In these days locomotives were named and not numbered. There were names enough, too, to go around.

Engineer Sigman left his home in the Middle West and came to the South long before the Civil War. He was on his engine at Conyers, Ga., when General William Sherman came along, and was forced to leave his cab, was driven into the thick woods near by until the army passed, and thus escaped injury and returned to his old engine. The cars attached to his train were burned.

It is estimated that during the half century and ten years that Engineer Sigman has been in the cab he has worn out no less than ten locomotives, illustrating the power of endurance of a man as compared with a machine.

During all of his experience with the throttle, Engineer Sigman has never had a serious accident nor has he killed a man, passenger or employee. He also enjoys the distinction of having never been discharged, suspended nor given a demerit. It is significant that some of the oldest and considered best engineers now in the employ of the Southern Railway system started in the trade as a fireman under Engineer Sigman. He is 81 years of age.

Boy Loses Both Arms Trying to Steal Ride.

"I was homesick, and thought I could steal my way home and save what little money I had to buy flowers for mother's grave," said fourteen-year-old Gary Watrous, who lost both arms when attempting to jump on an Erie train at Galion, for Marion, Ohio.

He was brought to his father's humble home at Marion. He had been visiting at Galion, and had fifty cents.

"I want to live and become a minister of the gospel," the boy told hospital surgeons. He will live, the physicians say.

Pitchers Afraid of Slugging Trio.

Cobb, of the Detroit Tigers, Jackson, of the Cleveland Naps, and Baker, of the Philadelphia Athletics! Every time that the ordinary American League pitcher thinks of this trio he begins shivering. The pitchers thought at the start of the season that they might be able to hold down the batting averages of these heavy swatters, but they are hopeless now.

Skim over Jackson's record since he has been a member in good standing. In his major-league slamming feats he has a better average than Tyrus Cobb. Cobb has been

trifling with the American League hurlers' shoots for five years. In that time he has never dropped below the .300 in his hitting. He has peered over the .400 hedge twice. His total batting average for these five years registers .383. Taking Cobb's personal mention by years, the statistics appear in the following form: 1908, .324; 1909, .377; 1910, .385; 1911, .420; 1912, .410.

When Jackson slambanged for an entire season he just naturally fell into the lockstep with Cobb. He batted the shoots for .387 in 1910, and had the proud and distinguished honor among the potentates of the punch for that year. His two following seasons netted him the following numerals: .408 and .395. These figures—and figures are supposed to tell no falsehoods—stamp him as a .400 batter.

Swaps Jobs With Wife and is Nearly Killed.

A proposal by A. C. Ball, a farmer, living near Colby, Kan., that he would wash the dishes for his wife if she would harrow six acres of ground, nearly cost him his life.

Mrs. Ball accepted the offer, and went to the field to begin her work, and her husband started in to wash the dishes. In cleaning a glass pitcher he severed an artery in his wrist, and nearly bled to death before his wife heard his calls for assistance. A brother, who brought him to Colby for treatment, said he would recover.

Brief Sporting News.

Joe Jackson, the heavy slugger of the Cleveland Naps, leads the American League in everything that his hands can attach themselves to, short of base stealing and batting. Jackson leads in the number of runs scored, hits, two-base drives, triples, and times at bat.

Of the three spitball artists from whom the National and American Leagues had every reason to expect most in the way of results, only one has been even fairly successful to date—Ed Walsh, of the Chicago White Sox, the oldest of the three. Russell Ford, the New York Yanks' star moist-ball pitcher, won't be able to show at his best until the hot weather of July and August. The same thing is said to be true of Jeff Tesreau, of the New York Giants.

National League managers are looking for right-handed batters. They are much in demand, but not in sight.

Out of fifty-three games played in this country by the Chinese baseball team from Hawaii, the Chinese have won forty-three.

The Philadelphia Athletics still look to be the class of the American League, says Manager McGraw, of the New York Giants. He says the Boston Red Sox show well against the weaker teams.

President Wilson has demonstrated that he is a real baseball fan. In the ninth inning of a game with Boston, Washington tied the score by an exciting batting rally, the President jumped to his feet, along with the crowd, and cheered. In the eleventh, when the home team won the game, his face was beaming with enthusiasm. The score was 5 to 4. The presence of the chief executive has appeared as an omen of good luck to the Washington play-

ers. They have won every time he has been in the grand stand, and he has been there for most of the home games.

Jack Dillon, the Indianapolis middleweight, who defeated Frank Klaus in the Hoosier State capital recently, is trying to arrange a bout with Eddie McGoorty. Rudy Unholz, the German fighter, who is looking after McGoorty's affairs, said he would be only too willing to close such a match if any club would offer suitable inducements.

Bell Cats to Save the Birds.

A request to the residents of Glen Ridge, N. J., to feed their cats regularly and to provide each cat with a strong collar and bell as a means of protecting the birds, is the appeal just made by the nature-study department of the Woman's Club.

Too many birds are killed by the cats, who are permitted to roam at will, the women folks say, all because their owners will not feed them.

Farm Full of Freaks.

Freaks are plentiful on the farm of Samuel Stine, near Lewistown, Pa. A potato raised there resembles to perfection the head and face of a calf. One of Stine's roosters lost its craw, and is in as good health as it was before the accident happened. One of the hens recently laid an egg measuring $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches one way and $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches the other. A pig that lost its mother has been raised on a bottle. A tree which was cut down the other day had a knife in its "fork," the knife having been completely grown over.

Doll Woman Loved Has Place in Her Coffin.

In the grave in which the remains of Mrs. Florence Stancel, of Trinidad, Colo., were laid to rest was placed a huge doll, which for months past the woman had insisted was her child, and which, in a dying request, she asked be placed in the coffin beside her.

Little is known here of Mrs. Stancel. She came here several months ago, following, it is understood, a quarrel with her husband. Later, her child, aged one year, died suddenly. The loss seemed to affect the woman's mind. She purchased the doll, and every day washed and cuddled it, exactly as a mother would care for her child.

Trickery Sends Lover to Prison.

Frank Delgado, a Mexican, has served more than a year in the State penitentiary, at Lincoln, Neb., because he believed American red tape in issuing marriage licenses demanded that the prospective bridegroom be imprisoned. His innocent question of one of the guards as to how much longer he would be expected to remain a prisoner has disclosed a case of miscarriage of justice. The records show that Delgado pleaded guilty to a statutory charge and was given five years.

According to a report made to Governor John H. Morehead by John O. Lesiter, of the board of pardons, Delgado, at that time a recent arrival in this country, fell in love with Virginia Marquez, 18 years old. Her father refused to consent to their marriage. Delgado persisted, and one day, according to his story, the father and uncle of the girl came to him, said everything was all right, and invited him to accompany them to the city hall to get the marriage license.

Instead, they drove to the courthouse, where they ob-

tained a warrant for Delgado's arrest on a charge of attacking his sweetheart. The uncle acted as interpreter for the court where Delgado was arraigned, and told Delgado he must nod his head in reply to questions asked him. Asked if he were guilty, Delgado nodded his head, and was sentenced to five years in prison.

Still under the impression that he was complying with the American law, Delgado accompanied the officers to prison without protest, and but for his natural anxiety to learn when his marriage would be celebrated, he probably would have been forced to serve out his term.

McCarthy's Death Worst Blow to His Manager.

Billy McCarthy is the man most affected by the death of Luther McCartney, who was killed in the first round of his bout with Arthur Pelkey, at Calgary, Canada. McCartney was a father, pal, and business manager combined to the big fellow. He knew Luther better than any other person, and he was completely wrapped up in him and his career.

The attachment between manager and fighter was a strong one, as usually is the case when a fighting firm pulls together for any length of time. Luther was an unsophisticated boy, who knew little of both sides of life when McCartney met him at Springfield, Mo., early in 1911. His rough edges were many.

McCarthy became a mentor as well as manager. He taught him table etiquette and other pointers a boxer needs to know if he is to be a big success. His instructions also took in the usages of a sleeping car, by the way. Luther had never ridden inside one before he came across McCartney, although he knew every crossbeam on the trucks beneath.

These first few months were dark ones for McCarthy and McCartney. The latter was matchmaker for a boxing club in Springfield, but few of his shows made any money. It wasn't long before they owed board bills, and a hundred private loans were charged up against them. Luther fought every now and then, but having no reputation, the proceeds were only enough to keep the landlady from calling on the prosecutor.

Their heels, as well as their spirits, were way below par when Carl Morris came to town. Carl was never anything of a fighter, but he was the instrument that brought fame and a year of fortune to the two Macs. McCartney knocked him out, and then the skies cleared.

The depressing times, however, cemented the friendship of McCarthy and McCartney, and ten knock-out punches could not have hurt Billy McCartney as much as watching Luther stretched out in the ring at Calgary, fighting his death battle.

Crowds Go to See Seven-footed Horse.

Teddy, the seven-footed horse, who is just one year old, has attracted more visitors to the farm of his owner, J. C. Lough, at Bearsville, W. Va., than could be drawn by any race horse or show animal in the State.

Each of Teddy's hind feet is normal. The left front leg has an extra bone running from the knee down to the pastern joint, where there are two hoofs, each of them touching the ground. There are three bones in the right front leg and three extra hoofs. All the feet are used in walking and supporting weight.

Teddy is of no mean parentage, his sire having been an imported Norman Percheron, and dam having been

three-fourths Norman. As Lough does not care to exhibit the horse in shows, hundreds of people go to the farm to see Teddy.

Crash Brings Death to Reckless Aviator.

The second death in aviation in Chicago this year came when James Colovan, a young air pilot, ran afoul a tree in Cicero Field and was crushed under his aeroplane. The plane, one of his own construction, was out for its first spin.

Aéro Club officers attribute the tragedy entirely to the inexperience of Colovan, who was only 24 years old, and to the attempt to fly in a stiff breeze. He took out the biplane against the advice of his partner, A. Partridge, mechanic.

"Pretty bad wind," cautioned Partridge.

"Try it once, anyway," said Colovan cheerfully, and sailed away.

Cat Almost Lunch for Hippo.

Jim, a large "ratter" cat that lives in the lion house, in the Central Park menagerie, in New York, was asleep on a pile of hay in the stall of Miss Murphy, the mother hippo, when that colossal creature decided to consume some of the hay. Jim did not notice the cat. Neither did George Sichert, the keeper, until Jim jumped out of the dangerous place just as the hippo tossed into his mouth the bundle of hay the cat was sleeping on.

There was a shout from some of the women and children as Jim sailed through the air and landed safely out of reach of the yawning jaws that it miraculously escaped. Jim lost several lives from terror.

Caught After Daring Escape.

James Arthur Baker, alleged notorious crook, who was arrested at Kansas City, Mo., recently, and escaped at Flagstaff, Ariz., from Sheriff Wilson, of Riverside, Cal., and a deputy while being taken back to that city for trial on a charge of grand larceny and forgery, was captured at Albuquerque, N. M., by Chief of Police Thomas McMillen.

Baker told of his escape from a drawing-room of a Santa Fe train while the officers slept. He crawled through the ventilator in the ceiling and rode on top of the Pullman to the first stop, where he jumped off and escaped. With \$70, which he had taken from the pocketbook belonging to one of the officers, he bought a ticket east on the next train, arriving at Albuquerque.

Lands Strange Fish After Two Days' Battle.

After a struggle which lasted two days and nights, a strange sea monster harpooned by Captain C. H. Thompson, of Knights Key, Fla., succumbed and was landed. The captain was on his five-ton motor boat when he sighted the big fish or animal, and during the struggle the boat was towed out into the ocean. Thompson sunk four harpoons into the giant before it showed any signs of giving up.

A first glance suggests that the monster is a whale. It is forty-four feet long and nearly half that wide. It has two immense fins like flippers of the walrus. The tail is vertical, while whales' tails are horizontal. The mouth is four feet across and is open three feet. At first it was believed to have no teeth, but the turning of an apron-like covering resembling leather revealed the presence of

the most remarkable dental apparatus that ever was seen, being very small, prehensile, and hook-shaped, something like those of a young alligator. They extend clear across the oral cavity above and below, and only an expert mathematician could estimate their number.

It is reported that a marine animal very like this was caught off the coast of California a few years ago, and there may be many more of them in other waters; but as they oxidize their blood by gills it is not necessary for them to come to the surface for air, which the whale is compelled to do at more or less regular intervals, or perish by drowning like a man. It was discovered in an out-of-the-way place, so far as navigation is concerned, and others of the kind may be encountered elsewhere.

O. Dammitt Wants to Have Different Name.

Orlando Dammitt, of Elmsford, N. C., wishes to change his name, and has started proceedings to that end. Dammitt says that his name has caused him a great deal of worry. For instance, it is a common thing to hear some friend shout:

"Dammitt! Come here a second, will you?"

Then again, Dammitt says that it is rather awkward for him when his name is being called at lodge meetings. The secretary goes down the list of names, and when he comes to his says:

"O. Dammitt!"

Wealthy Men in Smuggling Plot.

A sensational series of smuggling plots, by which sixteen Philadelphia bankers and business men have swindled the government out of more than a million dollars, has been disclosed by Harry N. Arnold, special assistant to Attorney General McReynolds.

The identity of the men who have succeeded in having dutiable goods passed through the port at Philadelphia free of duty is known to the investigators, and it is expected that when the Federal grand jury convenes indictments will be voted.

The investigation disclosed one particularly flagrant case, in which it is claimed a merchant shipped a large consignment of goods to his wife, and before he returned from Europe these goods were being sold over the counter in his store.

'Take the Crow from Roosters.

Cock-a-doodle-do-less roosters, guaranteed absolutely soundless, are now the subject of experiments by experts of the department of agriculture. A correspondent who discovered the process of eliminating the cocks' crow set the experts at work. A simple and painless operation of cutting one of the roosters vocal cords does the trick, he says. The rooster can fill his lungs and go through all the evolutions which accompany a hearty crow, but can make no sound.

Pup Cleared of Fowl Murder After Six Months in Pound.

Completely exonerated in a decision by Judge H. L. Kennan, of the Spokane County, Wash., superior court, Kim, the lingsque Airedale pup belonging to F. H. Goodwin, has been released after six months in the city pound. Kim was charged with entering the premises of Austin Corbin II., capitalist, biting off a cow's tail, and killing thirty-three Plymouth Rock pullets.

Corbin had Kim impounded and brought suit for dam-

ages in the justice's court. The pup was found not guilty of severing the cow's tail, but judgment of \$82.50 was allowed for the death of the fowls. Announcing that the reputation of his pup was at stake, Goodwin appealed the case. In the superior court he established an alibi for the pup, leaving Corbin responsible for a \$30 board bill at the pound.

Wants Plows, Harvesters, Hay Loaders to Decorate American Warships.

American warships will bristle with harvesters, plows, hay loaders, safety razors, fireless cookers, punctureless automobile tires, vacuum cleaners, electric fans, coffee percolators, and other implements of peace if Congress takes the advice of Representative W. S. Goodwin, of Arkansas.

Goodwin has drawn up a bill authorizing the display of exhibits of American manufactures on all craft of the United States navy. He thinks it could engage in "commercial warfare" in times of peace and acquaint foreign peoples with the virtues of American products.

Goodwin sees a vision of dreadnaughts and cruisers blooming with examples of American craftsmanship, carpets, wall paper, mission furniture, ready-made clothing, shoes, canned foods, hats, underwear, typewriters, and countless other articles of domestic manufacture.

Headlight on Motor Plow Aids Kansan in Work on Big Farm.

With a powerful searchlight on the head of his gasoline tractor, O. Q. Ellis is plowing and sowing maize on his Morton County, Kan., ranch.

He has nearly 3,000 acres, of which 400 acres already have been broken. He is using a thirty-horse-power tractor outfit which does the plowing and disking, harrowing and planting in one operation, planting thirty acres a day. This makes the work as practicable at night as by day. This fall he will put in 1,500 acres of wheat.

Young Astor Will Fly Seventy Miles an Hour.

Vincent Astor declares his intention of buying an airplane capable of a speed of seventy miles an hour, and he will call on Glenn Curtiss, the airplane builder, soon.

The young multimillionaire seems to have contracted the speed mania in its most malignant form. Besides churning the Hudson River in his new racing yacht, the *Corcyra*, he is burning up the country roads near Rhinecliff, N. Y., in a new automobile that is guaranteed to do 100 miles an hour.

Amateur Skipper for "Shamrock IV."

It is understood in London that Sir Thomas Lipton has placed the command of his new America's Cup challenger, *Shamrock IV*, in the hands of W. P. Burton, who has accepted the offer. Burton is the late owner of the *Octavia*, and is one of the best-known amateurs in the yachting world.

During his yachting career, extending over a period of thirty years, Burton has sailed in over a thousand races. This will mark the first occasion on which an amateur has sailed a Lipton challenger for the America's Cup.

Detectives Play Ghost.

Playing the part of ghosts, Detectives James McKeen and William Ryan, of the Liberty Avenue station, East New York, terrified and arrested two grave vandals in Cypress

Hills Cemetery, L. I. Cemeteries in Brooklyn and Queens have been robbed recently of many thousands of dollars' worth of bronze work and railings, and the monuments have been damaged greatly.

The detectives went to Cypress Hills Cemetery one night recently, and saw two young men slipping along in the darkness. They crept after them. The youths busied themselves with stripping a burial plot of its bronze metal work.

Ryan and McKeen began to moan, and the thieves looked around nervously.

"You are robbing my grave," they heard in a wail from the shadows.

Dropping their loot the vandals turned to flee. The detectives clutched and held them. The prisoners said they were Arno Pickredo, of Indiana Place, Glendale, Queens, and Manuel Rose, of 568 Covert Street.

Cats Rear Baby Foxes.

Two mother cats are rearing eight baby foxes between them, one old cat is bringing up four young squirrels, a hog ran over a 16-year-old boy, maiming him for life, and a hen lays every day an egg three inches long. These are a few things that are interesting Murphysboro, Ill., people.

The old cat that is furnishing food and motherly care to the squirrels is at the home of James Snyder, on North Fifteenth Street.

A farmer found the little squirrels in a tree he cut down, and gave them to Snyder, who had a cat with young kittens. He took away four of the five kittens and put the squirrels in their place. The mother cat accepted the foster children, and has taken as much care of them as she has of the remaining kitten. The little squirrels are fat and frisky, and are very fond of their adopted mother and the kitten.

The little foxes were found by John L. Davis and George Bost, who are farmers, four miles north of Murphysboro. There were eight foxes and they were taken by Bost and Sherman Leichleiter, each of whom had an old cat with young kittens. They took away the kittens and placed the baby foxes with the cats. The tabbies have given the foxes all the motherly care and attention cats give to kittens, and the little fellows appear contented.

A three-legged cat is at the home of Fred C. Bierr, ex-city attorney. The cat has only one front leg, and it is at the middle of the shoulders. It goes about just as well as a cat with four legs. It is five weeks old.

Arrell Smith, son of William Smith, who lives near Murphysboro, was feeding hogs March 9, when one dashed upon him, knocked him down, and caused a backward dislocation of the knee, which did not heal. Recently a doctor "broke" the knee and reset it, but he fears the leg will be stiff during life.

J. L. Brown, of rural free delivery route No. 1, has a hen that has laid an egg three inches long every day for the last three weeks.

At 67, Starts on a Walk of 3,000 Miles.

J. W. Carpenter left Lincoln's monument, in Springfield, Ill., recently, for a trip on foot to every president's grave in the United States. The trip will cover about 3,000 miles, and Carpenter expects that it will take about nine months.

Carpenter is 67 years old and believes walking of great benefit to his health. He will go to Indianapolis, Ind.;

North Bend, Ohio; Springfield, Ky.; Nashville, Hermitage, and Greenville, Tenn.; Richmond, Va.; Washington, D. C.; Lancaster, Pa.; Princeton, N. J.; New York City; Quincy, Mass.; Concord, N. H.; back into New York to Albany and Buffalo, thence to Canton and Cleveland, Ohio, ending his pilgrimage at the grave of Rutherford B. Hayes, in Fremont, Ohio.

Rotten Girder Caused Thirty-seven to Die.

One rotten girder caused the collapse of the municipal pier at Long Beach, Cal., in which thirty-seven persons were killed. This is the finding of three experts who made a report to the coroner's jury. The experts found that the pier had been faultily built, and testimony showed that the platform was not overcrowded. The pier was built ten years ago.

Find Increase in Wreck Deaths.

Two hundred and eight persons were killed and 4,598 injured in train accidents during July, August, and September in 1912, the interstate commerce commission announced recently in its latest bulletin, an increase of 187 fatalities and 215 injuries over the corresponding period of the previous year.

Defective roadway and equipment caused 68 per cent of all derailments during that quarter. The number of accidents including collisions and derailments showed a total increase of 935. Industrial accidents claimed a toll of 114 killed and 28,884 injured.

Six Hundred Million Dollars for Music.

Nearly \$600,000,000 is spent annually by Americans on music, according to detailed figures submitted recently to the annual meeting of the New York State Music Teachers' Association by John C. Freund.

The report gave the following annual expenditures: Opera, \$8,000,000; concerts of all kinds, \$30,000,000; church music, \$50,000,000 to \$55,000,000; orchestras in theaters, vaudeville, and moving-picture houses, \$30,000,000; military and brass bands of all kinds, \$35,000,000; conservatories, schools, and private teachers, \$175,000,000; American students, expenses, and tuition abroad, \$7,500,000. The expenditures in the musical industries amount to \$230,000,000 annually, the speaker said.

Analyzing these figures, Mr. Freund said that this country spent every year for music three times the amount spent on the army and navy.

Boy Hides Agony from Sister.

While he was being carried to an ambulance with his right leg nearly blown off by a soda-water tank explosion at Glen Island, N. Y., Robert Boule, 16 years old, of New Rochelle, began to whistle "Here Comes My Daddy Now," when he was told that his sister was approaching.

The ruse worked, for his sister, thinking he was only slightly hurt, spent the rest of the day with her friends.

Boule was charging with compressed air the soda-water tank at the Beach Lawn, when it exploded. He was taken to the New Rochelle Hospital, where his leg was amputated.

Bankers Protest Laundered Money.

Letters from 587 bank presidents and cashiers throughout the country protesting against washed money, and proclaiming it "the counterfeiters' delight," were offered for

printing as a public document recently by Senator Martine. Objection from Senator Smoot prevented the printing.

During the discussion Senator Martine said a bank president in Tennessee had written him, declaring that the "man should be tarred and feathered who put pantaloons on the American eagle adorning our currency." Senator Gallinger suggested that the treasury's money-laundering process might "wash the pants off."

Americans Show Skill.

American horse-training methods are coming in for high praise in Germany again this season, owing to the excellent results accomplished by the stable of Baron Oppenheim, the Cologne millionaire, under the direction of J. Hyland, formerly of Sheephead Bay, N. Y.

Although the season has just begun, Hyland's mounts have already won more than \$50,000 in prize money. His friends say he has the best chance of capturing the Vienna Derby and the Germany Derby, at Hamburg, later in the month, each of which is a \$25,000 event.

Copology Degrees for Philly Police.

Dancing, target shooting, physical culture, medicine, civics, and law are to be taught the Philadelphia police. There will be brief practical courses in each at the police station at Tenth and Taylor Streets, which has been refitted as a schoolroom.

The dances are planned to make the bluecoats lithe and supple; turkey trots and the like will be barred. The physical-culture course is to include swimming, wrestling, and boxing. The medical instruction will be limited to "first aid to the injured."

In law there will be such questions as are of practical importance to every policeman. He is to be taught the rights of the citizens and just how far he may proceed without violating those rights. He will be told how to secure evidence that will hold good in a court of law, and he will be informed on the State and Federal laws as well as the municipal ordinances.

Burglar Came to Rob and Stayed to Pray.

A burglar was captured at a a. m. in a Salvation Army home, in Lower Clapton Road, London, which he had entered in mistake for an ordinary house.

When the alarm was given, Captain Mary Booth, daughter of General Booth, came from her room and urged upon the intruder the wickedness of his conduct. He said want of food was responsible, and his captor thereupon gave him a good meal. She then insisted that he should pray with her, and, asking an assurance that he would reform, escorted the burglar to the front door.

Schools of France Are Adopting Baseball.

Baseball has now been adopted by most of the progressive schools and colleges of France, and they are just now looking forward to the world's series as it is on the Seine. The Ecole Pascal is now running at the top of the intercollegiate division, and the team representing the cadets of the army is likely to meet it in the final tournament.

Thousands were gathered recently on the diamond of Bagatelle, in the Bois de Boulogne, when the Lycee Condorcet nine, captained by M. Jacques de Saint-Maurice, met the Pascal nine, captained by M. J. Coudert, who has

been one of the pioneers of the French student ball bugs. The Pascal lads slammed the Condorcetes over the diamond for 27 to 8 runs. A feature of the playing was the pitching of Gervais la Fontaine, a grandnephew of the poet, who is quite a southpaw man in France.

Twenty-five Years Leper, but Escaped All Suspicion.

Some excitement was caused at Narragansett Pier recently by the announcement that William Comber, a resident, was afflicted with leprosy, and had been suffering from that disease for 25 years.

He was declared a leper by Doctor Gardner T. Swarts, secretary of the State board of health. Comber recently went from Narragansett Pier to New York City.

The case was discovered when Doctor Clarence E. Gardner, a local physician, called to attend another member of the family. He notified Doctor Swarts, who at once declared Comber to be suffering from a typical case of leprosy.

The man had not been out of the house for about five years, but no other member of the family, Doctor Swarts said, showed any symptoms of the disease.

With the exception of the father, who is proprietor of a small hotel, the family have gone, it is stated, to New York. Doctor Swarts said that he has been unable thus far to discover where the leper is now living.

Comber is thought to have contracted the disease in China, where he lived when a child with his parents. His father was a storekeeper in Hongkong and Formosa.

Married Three Times, Father of Fifty.

In Thomas Ellison, better known as "Uncle" Tom, who resides in Newton County, Ark., it is believed the real champion of the principles of Theodore Roosevelt has been found. Uncle Tom is 93 years old. The birth recently of a son to one of his granddaughters caused a recasting of Ellison's record. Here it is:

Married three times; father of 50 children; grandfather of 125 children; great-grandfather of 60 children; great-great-grandfather of 27 children. His youngest child is 11 years old, the oldest 65.

Plan to Detect Horse Doping.

The special department commission, appointed in France to inquire into the question of "doping" race horses, following the alleged illicit practices of certain Americans and French owners, which last year led to the disqualification of their horses after winning some important races, has just submitted its report to the ministry of agriculture.

The commission found signs that certain drugs were traceable 24 hours after administration, but caffeine and theobromine might be detected 48 hours after.

When, however, the horse was slightly dosed immediately prior to a race, all traces disappeared within an hour.

The minister of agriculture has now to decide what measure shall be necessary to protect the owners and the public from the results of the practice of "doping." It will probably be the immediate examination of any horse whose behavior in a race is abnormal in any way.

New Philippine Stamp Order.

Postmaster General Burleson and Secretary of War Garrison have signed a joint order directing that after July 1 the embossed, stamped envelopes and single 1-cent postal cards of the United States be valid for postage in the

Philippine Islands when directed to addresses in the United States, and that those of the Philippines be accepted here under similar conditions. Stamps are not included in the order.

Postmaster General Burleson also issued an order discontinuing the use of the special 10-cent registry stamp, and providing that no additional registry stamps shall be printed after the present supply shall have been exhausted. Hereafter ordinary postage stamps may be used for the prepayment of registry fees.

Japanese Publish Maxims for Long Life.

Great publicity is being given in Paris to the Japanese prescription for living at least 100 years. The prescription consists of these twelve commandments:

One—Rise early and go to bed early.

Two—Sleep six or seven hours in a perfectly dark room with the window open.

Three—Pass as much time as possible in the open air.

Four—Eat meat once daily.

Five—Drink a moderate quantity of tea and coffee, but abstain from tobacco and alcohol.

Six—Take a very hot bath in the morning.

Seven—Discard silk garments and dress in coarse cloth.

Eight—Take one day in the week for rest, doing no reading or writing that day.

Nine—Avoid overheated places, especially if the system of central heating is employed.

Ten—Restore the organs which are impaired by age by eating similar organs of animals.

Eleven—Avoid strong emotions and intellectual overwork.

Twelve addressed specially to men—If a bachelor, marry; if a widower, marry again.

It is the tenth and twelfth commandments that strike Parisians as particularly original.

Nose Built from a Rib.

Adam Williams, of Pittsburgh, a railroad brakeman, whose nose was broken last winter when he struck an overhead bridge, is convalescing in a Baltimore, Md., hospital with a new nose built of bone taken from one of his ribs. After he was hurt the surgeons removed the broken bones from his nose, but he had to breathe through silver tubes until the wound had healed. This, however, left him minus two nasal bones, and the bridge of his nose was flat on his face.

Recently the surgeons decided upon a second operation. They made an incision in his right side, sawed a thin piece of bone from his third rib, and cut it into two pieces the shape of the two nasal bones. These were fitted against the cheek bone and the nose fashioned into its proper shape. The nose then was placed in a plaster cast, and the doctors say it is as good as ever.

Last Laugh Was Not Best Laugh.

Overjoyed at playing the winning card in a bridge game, Mrs. Mary Trelkald, a widow, 74 years old, of Hartford, Conn., started to laugh, and died still laughing, before physicians could arrive. She was playing a game with her grandsons, in which it appeared as if one of her opponents had played the winning card. She held the high card, however, and when she played it and saw his discomfiture, she laughed uproariously. When she continued to laugh two physicians were sent for, who arrived just after her death.

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We give herewith a list of some of the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

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657—The Black Hand Nemesis.
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681—The Policy King Baffled.
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684—Trailing a Secret Thread.
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686—A Puzzle of Identities.
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694—The Chemical Clue.
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698—The Master Crook's Match.
699—The Man Who Vanished.
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703—A Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.

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707—The Bolt from the Blue.
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764—The Tracks in the Snow.
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766—The Masters of Millions.
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768—The Lost Clue.
769—The Midnight Message.
770—The Turn of a Card.
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790—Zanoni, the Witch.
791—A Vengeful Sorceress.
792—The Prison Demon.
793—Doctor Quartz on Earth Again.
794—Doctor Quartz's Last Day.
795—Zanoni, the Transfigured.

796—The Lure of Gold.
797—The Man With a Chest.
798—A Shadowed Life.
799—The Secret Agent.
800—A Plot for a Crown.
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